

THE HOLY PANCHAKSHARA



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BY

SRI - LA - SRI PANRIMALAI SWAMIGAL

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THE HOLY
PANCHAKSHARA



Sri - La - Sri Panrimalai Swamigal

**THE HOLY
PANCHAKSHARA
AND OTHER WRITINGS
OF
SRI-LA-SRI PANRIMALAI SWAMIGAL**

SECOND EDITION

1972

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PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

The excellent reception to the publication "The Holy Pan-chakshara" has encouraged me to bring out a second edition in a short time. In this edition eleven more articles materialised by Sri-La-Sri Panimalai Swamigal at the request of his devotees and published in "The Bhavan's Journal" have been included. Another multicoloured picture of the Sadguru and two other pictures of Sri Swamiji with his mother and with his consort also adorn the pages of the book. The colour picture of Swamiji is symbolic of his bestowing his blessings and grace from the seat of Wisdom (Vel) surrounded by the Pranava (circle formed by the feathers of the peacock's tail) in the atmosphere of Pranava Nada (Cock). It indicates that the advice and guidance of a Sadguru are essential to acquire self-knowledge and the blessings of the Guru and the sages are the best means to destroy ignorance and realise the Atman.

Explaining the miracles performed by him, Swamiji says: "The role of miracles in the scheme of my spiritual life is merely to call the attention of humanity to the immense potentiality of the divine power in man, which, if developed in the proper manner, will go a great way in diminishing the sufferings of people."

Distinguishing between the eight-fold siddhis mentioned in Yoga Sastra and the ones he possessed, Swamiji declares that the latter are of a divine origin and unlimited in power, while the former, being of human origin, are necessarily cluttered with limitations. To him siddhis are just like roses on the wayside for him to pick or ignore.

It is pertinent to mention here the personal experiences of two devotees of Swamiji:

Dr. T. V. Ranganathan of Tiruchirapalli (Tamilnadu) was operating upon a young girl for cataract. She had already lost one eye as a result of an accident. Immediately after the corneal

incision the contents of the eye ball (lens and vitreous) prolapsed and flowed out and the doctor felt that the only healthy eye of the girl was lost by his operation. He wished in his heart of hearts that Swamiji of whose superhuman powers he had heard could restore her eye sight. As he was leaving the operation theatre after bandaging the operated eye, a message was brought to him saying that Swamiji would be arriving the next morning and that he should make arrangements to receive him. He felt the coincidence significant. The next day Swamiji arrived and left for Tirupathi immediately. Neither the doctor nor Swamiji spoke about the operation. When the doctor opened the dressing later at the hospital he found to his great surprise and joy that the eye ball was almost normal and the girl had vision. There was an uneventful recovery and the patient was discharged with a happy result. In the words of the doctor "The miracle convinced me that some power beyond our comprehension exists and acts through His chosen Agency and I realised Swamiji is one of the chosen few."

The experience of Shri A. Chidambaram, District and Sessions Judge, Madras, was of a different kind. Swamiji visited his house and performed Pooja. A passport size picture of Swamiji was produced and at the instance of Swamiji, Shri Chidambaram, Shri Kavi Yogi Shuddhananda Bharati and another devotee present authenticated the picture by affixing their signatures on the reverse. Swamiji kept the picture on the table in front and after a few minutes invited the host to examine the picture. Though the signatures remained intact, the image of Swamiji had disappeared and in its place appeared the form of Sri Tiruchendur Sendil Andavar (Lord Subrahmanya) with His consorts Valli and Daivayani. I was witness to this transformation in the early hours of the morning of 13th November, 1970.

When Jivan-muktas like Sri-La-Sri Panrimalai Swamigal live in the world after attaining knowledge and realisation of God and move among the people armed with authority from God and power from Him to impart spiritual knowledge to others and alleviate the

sufferings of humanity, it behoves us laymen to partake of their bounty and grace and transform our thoughts and lives by trying to follow in their footsteps. One should seek and learn what one does not know from such Enlightened Souls as Sri-La-Sri Panrimalai Swamigal.

Swamiji has truly said "He who has won the Grace of the Guru shall undoubtedly be saved and never forsaken. Association with Saints and God-men works a subtle alchemy even though its effects might only become visible years later". What is required is faith. Once a man has faith he achieves all.

— A. V. Ramachandran

Bombay, 5th April, 1972.

INTRODUCTION

It is an indisputable fact that our Motherland has from times immemorial been and is still the birthplace of mighty spiritual giants who have shed their brilliance far and wide in all directions in every nook and corner of the world. No other country has produced a galaxy of such divine souls and influenced the destinies of mankind. There were saints like Matsyendranath and Goraknath, Kabir and Meera in the North; Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda, Shri Yuktheswar and Swami Yogananda in the East; Sant Tukaram and Saint Dhyaneswar, Shri Sai Baba and Swami Nityananda in the West. But it was given to the South to produce a plethora of Saints and Siddhas. Tiruvalluvar, Avvaiyar, Arunagirinadhar, Pattinathar, Ramalinga Swamigal, Thyagaraja, Parama Guru Chatti Swamiyar, Sri Aurobindo and Shri Ramana Maharshi are but a few names which are immortalised in the hearts of millions and millions of our countrymen.

Sri-La-Sri Panrimalai Swamigal is a living Sat Purusha of the highest order. A unique feature about him is that he is a grihasthasrami and while in the family he is demonstrating to the world the truism that grihasthasrama or a householder's life is not an impediment to those seeking self-realisation. The lines on Sri Swamigal's palms and feet outline the Conch, Chakra, Shatkona and Banner of Lord Muruga which are indicative of his celestial qualities and greatness. By his child-like simplicity and charm, solicitude for the welfare of the people, irrespective of caste, creed, status and religion and his intense desire to relieve them of their sufferings and lead them towards the path of God, Sri Swamigal has endeared himself to whoever came into contact with him and influenced their way of life to their advantage.

Sri Swamigal performs miracles only to prove that there is a higher spiritual force which guides the destinies of man and to create faith in God in the minds of atheists. Rightly has Jesus Christ said "Except ye see signs and wonders, Ye will not believe" (St. John, IV:48). Fulfilment of this saying of

Christ has become a matter of daily routine with Swamiji. His Mission in the present context of a sceptic world is something unique and posterity will no doubt be indebted to him for his contribution to the evolution of the human soul.

The quintessence of Sri-La-Sri Panrimalai Swamigal's teaching is that human birth being rare, with the special faculty of discrimination bestowed on him, it is the duty of man to tread the righteous path shown to him by the Great Ones and reach the blessed feet of the Lord—there to experience ever lasting bliss. Immortality is the birth-right of all and every soul is potentially divine. An undivided devotion to the Guru and uncompromising control of the senses are the sure means to attain the ultimate objective of life. When the seeker, with faith in God and abiding devotion to Him, yearns for liberation or vision of God, the Sat Guru will himself come in quest of him and guide him with proper initiation towards the goal of God-Realisation.

Swamiji extols Siva Raja Yoga as the path that leads, through Pranayama, practised with dispassion and perseverance, to the realisation of the Supreme Light (Jyoti) which is the quintessence of the Holy Panchakshara OM NA-MA-SI-VA-YA and emphasises that the esoteric truths of this sacred Panchakshara Mantra are to be learnt from a realised guru in the privacy of devout discipleship, with due humility and fervour. Tirumoolar, the great saintly authority, compares the Holy Panchakshara to a beautiful fruit which when chewed is soft but when eaten is sweetness itself.

How Swamiji came into my life is a unique experience. The concept of simplicity in greatness and greatness in simplicity which I cherish most was exemplified beyond a shadow of doubt and he drew me to himself by a simple gesture. While in the fitness of things it was expected of me to rush to him for darshan, it was he who actually expressed the wish to see me and conveyed it to me through my mother when I returned home from office. Needless to say I was greatly amazed but

nevertheless hastened to meet him and receive his blessings. This intensely human aspect of Swamiji's nature and the divine miracle which happened to me while I was in his company at Tryambak, near Nasik, one of the twelve sacred places of Jyotirlingas in India, gave a new shape to my life. The sudden vision of Swamiji and his consort vouchsafed to my mother at the time of her death was another eye-opener to me of his greatness. I saw and continue to see around me many miracles wrought by Swamiji and one and all of them conveyed to me many truths which I have yet to come across in the books I have perused. I am constantly reminded of another great saying of Jesus Christ, "Blessed are The Pure in heart; for they shall see God" (Matthew: V:8). I am equally convinced that Swamiji can show God to the earnest seeker who is pure in heart and truly yearns for the experience.

Sri-La-Sri Panrimalai Swamigal's teachings have been appearing from time to time in the form of articles in "The Bhavan's Journal". For the benefit of the innumerable and far-flung devotees of Swamiji and seekers of truth all the articles hitherto published in the Journal have been brought within the compass of this book and published, with grateful acknowledgement to 'The Bhavan's Journal'. Readers will be interested to know that the articles "The Efficacy of Sri Rama Nama", "Lord Sri Krishna", "Kriya Yoga", "The Guru", "The Basic Tenets of Indian Culture", "Atma Vidya (Self-knowledge)" and "Pancha Kosha Viveka" were materialised by Swamiji at the request of his devotees during his recent visits to Bombay and Madras. They will be further delighted to know that Swamiji himself has drawn the illustration "Sri Daiva Tatwam" which is published in this volume, depicting the human body and identifying its various limbs with the Holy Panchakshara.

May the Grace of Sri-La-Sri Panrimalai Swamigal descend on all of us in greater measure and may his teachings and guidance enrich and ennoble our lives in every way!

Bombay, 10-10-1970

—A. V. Ramachandran



Sri-La-Sri Panrimalai Swamigal with his Mother

THE SAGE OF PANRIMALAI (i)

How He came to be hailed Sri-La-Sri Panrimalai Swamigal

A. V. Ramachandran,

Vice-President

Sri-La-Sri Panrimalai Samikal Mission (Central)

"Your daughter will beget a male child in the month of Chaitra. He will be born in the Star of Bharani and will possess divine attributes"—these words from the mouth of an Elder spoken to her parents fell into the ears of Srimathi Angammal and filled the expectant mother with ecstasy. "You are going to give birth to a son who will shine like Lord Sri Rama. You are extremely lucky"—these further prophetic words addressed by Kasilingam, the Mahatma, directly to her were reverberating in her ears all the time.

Sri Arumugam Pillai was a Saivite and worshipper of Lord Muruga. He was endowed with mantric powers and was a veterinary doctor too and a great social worker. His life partner was Srimathi Angammal, a very pious lady and a devoted wife. They lived happily in Panrimalai Village, situated on a hill in the Kodaikanal Range in Madurai District in Tamil Nadu—the abode of many Rishis and Siddhas who had realised God and attained liberation.

Srimathi Angammal came to her parents' home in Bala-samudram during the 7th month of her pregnancy for delivery and in due course of time, as predicted by the Mahatma, on an auspicious day, when the lucky Star "Bharani" was in the ascendent, she was delivered of a male child. The new-born was resplendent, with divine attributes and full of grace and was named Ramaswami in sacred memory of the name of his grandfather and in honour of Lord Sri Rama, the presiding deity of the village.

The face of the young one was divine; his actions were divine too. While the child slept in the cradle, a variety of fragrance permeated the room. When the child was put to bed with his head facing the West, he was found sleeping with his head facing towards the East. On another occasion the child disappeared, to the consternation of the family members. They felt happy only when the child appeared in the cradle again! Sometimes on the child's forehead appeared Vibhuti, sometimes Kumkum tilak and sometimes Namam, which is the symbol of Vaishnavism. The hair in the body was upturned—a divine attribute which reminded one of the great Roma Rishi. This phenomenon proved that the child was endowed from birth with the grace of Siva, Sakthi and Vishnu.

Another significant phenomenon occurred at this time. When the child's grandmother was entering the house where the child was sleeping in a cradle, the child's mother who was coming out of the child's room accosted her and telling her that the child Ramaswami was endowed with divine attributes, placed in her hands fruits and Vibhuti and left the house. The very next moment she returned to the house and finding in her mother's hands fruits and Vibhuti asked her as to who gave her the prasad. Only then the truth was realised that the lady who accosted the grandmother and gave her prasad was not the real mother of the child but divinity itself in the garb of the mother.

At the age of 5, Ramaswami's parents came to Bala-samudram, very near Palani and left him in the care of his grandparents Sri Karuppanna Pillai and Srimathi Goundayi Ammal, for his education. Ramaswami's mind was completely absorbed in devotion to Dandayudhapani—the Lord of Palani—whose shrine he visited every Monday. His greatness was recognised by Salli Samiyar, an ascetic of a high order, who was dwelling in the Aiyampulli Vinayagar temple. Salli Samiyar used to collect a copper paisa from every one and distribute it

to the children in the temple and play with them like a child. He would distribute the paise to every one except to young Ramaswami, who himself would neither desire it nor extend his hand for it. The priest of the temple who was watching this for sometime asked Salli Samiyar why he was not giving a paisa to Ramaswami too. To which the Samiyar replied: "He is himself a Periya Samiyar (a great Saint). How can I give him a coin?"

At the age of 8, Ramaswami was one day playing with his friend Silar Saheb in front of the Ganesha temple in Semmattu Pillayar Kulam. A saintly person in saffron robes beckoned to the two boys and asked them to bring him Ganja. Ramaswami immediately ran and brought it to him. The Holy Man asked Ramaswami to take bath in the tank. When this was done, he asked Ramaswami to open his mouth and put Vibhuti into it from his bag and wrote something with a Vel from top to bottom on his tongue, smeared his whole body with Vibhuti and blessed him. Silar Saheb, who was watching all this from a distance, was terrified and ran to the village for help. In the meanwhile, the Holy Man, having completed his mission, went inside the temple and disappeared. Young Ramaswami suddenly realised that a new force was pervading throughout his body. He gained spiritual power and the words that he spoke proved true. He realised that he could perform miracles, without knowing how or why. He would put cobras round his neck and play with them. He could drive away evil spirits and cure poisonous bites. Small pebbles distributed by him to his playmates turned into sugar candy in their mouths at his bidding. One day his grand mother took him to Kannadiya Perumal temple. The priest of the temple was writhing with stomach pain. Ramaswami gave him Vibhuti which cured him of his chronic stomach pain permanently without a trace.

Chatti Samiyar was a great Siddha Purusha, in Palani, whose very touch bestowed spiritual power. He was known by

that name because of the chatti or mud pot in his hands. Chatti Samiyar showered loving affection on Ramaswami and Ramaswami too visited the Samiyar atleast once a month. Chatti Samiyar initiated Ramaswami into a sacred mantra. He asked him to get a mud pot, fill it with water, place a bunch of margosa leaves in the middle of it and perform puja, repeating the Upadesa Mantra for 108 days continuously to derive its benefits. Ramaswami performed puja as ordered for 51 days, both morning and evening. On the 52nd day what he saw in the puja room filled him with awe and upset his mind. His grand father who noticed this asked him to discontinue the puja. Ramaswami had no peace of mind thereafter. He again commenced puja and this time he was not upset by what he saw. The sight which upset him at first gradually changed into a brilliant light from which emanated lotus leaves which multiplied a thousand fold. In the midst of it emerged a radiant, smiling, bewitchingly beautiful Goddess, full of love, which left him speechless with wonder. It was none other than Adi, Para Sakthi who blessed Ramaswami and disappeared. In her place was revealed the ever resplendent, smiling vision of Bala Muruga, exuding divine fragrance. From thence Lord Muruga appeared before Ramaswami whenever he thought of Him.

‘Achanda Malai Paradesi’, another sage, who happened to visit Ayyampulli Vinayagar Koil in Balasamudram, gave further impetus to young Ramaswami’s spiritual evolution by taking him with him to visit many holy places throughout India. The urge for self-realisation was very great in Ramaswami. He felt that here was a Guru who could enlighten him. So, without taking the permission of his grand parents or telling anyone else, Ramaswami, at the age of 13, accompanied Achanda Malai Paradesi, in his itinerary. After teaching Ramaswami all that he had to learn Achanda Malai Paradesi blessed him and sent him back to his grand father’s house. Ramaswami became a fully realised soul—a Siddha Purusha.

Pul Pidungi Samiyar was another great Siddha. He looked like a mad man. His hands were plucking grass but his mind was always attuned to God. Ramaswami knew the intrinsic greatness of the Samiyar and was determined to get his blessings. The Samiyar had a blanket and a Sankhu (Conch) which possessed great powers. Ramaswami obtained a portion of the blanket and the Sankhu (Conch) from the Samiyar with his blessings.

At a very early age, Palani and Palani Andavar moulded the spiritual life of Ramaswami and developed it into a ripe state. Ramaswami was a golden lamp which was filled with the ghee of love. There were five wicks of compassion dipped in the ghee of love, in the five grooves of the lamp. The Adi Guru who wrote with a Vel on the tongue of Ramaswami and the divine ones, Salli Samiyar, Chatti Samiyar, Achanda Malai Paradesi and Pul Pidungi Samiyar—the five lights which were burning brilliantly—kindled the light in the lamp that was Ramaswami. Their grace enabled him to shine forth as a beacon light in all its brilliance. It was due to their grace again that Ramaswami was endowed with powers to alleviate the sufferings of humanity by mere sight, touch, thought or words and enabled him to master all the mantras—and the supreme Pranava Panchakshara Mantra (Om Namasivaya)—to bestow their benefits on all those who approach him.

Ramaswami studied in the school in Balasamudram from his 5th to 7th year. He was diligent in his studies and his behaviour towards the teachers and elders was exemplary. He became famous for his Atma Sakthi and his words proved true. His intelligence pleased not only his teachers but also the officers who came to inspect the school. His power to cure snake bites and other poisonous bites brought many sufferers to the school from different villages, far and near. They used to wait outside while Ramaswami was studying in the class

room. His teacher, one Ganapathi Vadyar, was not pleased with this and in an angry tone commanded Ramaswami to leave off that work and concentrate on his studies. Ramaswami readily agreed to this. Just then a servant came running from the teacher's house stating that Ganapathi Vadyar's nephew was bitten by a snake and that unless the poison was removed immediately, it would endanger his life. The poor teacher was in a dilemma. He knew that Ramaswami alone could save the boy. But how could the teacher flout his own instructions? He, however, swallowed his pride and requested Ramaswami to accompany him to his house and asked for his forgiveness. Ramaswami who was all compassion cured the child. The order of the teacher was rescinded and Ramaswami the healer continued to serve humanity as before.

It was his 17th year. Even though his mind was fixed in meditation on Iswara and the path of Gyana, yet in deference to the wishes of his father, Ramaswami agreed to marry and settle down as a householder. The marriage of Ramaswami with Tiru selvi Pappathi Ammal, daughter of Sri Mariyappillai and Srimathi Karuppayi Ammal was solemnised with great eclat at Palani. The newly weds were both of one mind and their lives ran smoothly and happily. Once Ramaswami's mother gave her daughter-in-law Rs. 5/-. When the couple was alone, the wife who had heard of the marvellous powers of her husband, wanted to experience them herself and requested him to give her sugar candy as he gave to others. The husband said "Hand over the Rs. 5/- my mother gave you and I will give you sugar candy". Without question she gave him the money. Immediately Ramaswami raised his hands and told her 'Take it'. Sugar candy poured into her hand like rain. Thus divinity was manifested even in their married life. She was a devoted and loving wife and he gave her spiritual guidance according to her merit. Their married life lasted 42 years. For 24 years they lived as man and wife, after which she became his disciple. She used to



Sri-La-Sri Panrimalai Swamigal with his Consort



arrange everything for his puja and was helpful in strengthening his Atma Sakhti. 20 years after marriage Ramaswami gave her initiation. 25 years after marriage she also gained Atma Sakhti.

On 12-8-1965, after a brief illness, the Holy Mother passed away and her soul merged with the Infinite.

Swamigal has a son, Pechimuthu Raja by name, who was married to Ramagiri alias Laxmi and they have two sons, Vetri Vadivel and Sakthi Vadivel and a daughter Rajaratnam.

Ratnammal was the loving and dutiful daughter of Swamigal. She devoted her life to helping her mother in household matters and attending to her father's needs and fulfilling his wishes. She was endowed with spiritual powers and followed the foot-steps of her illustrious father. She knew how to treat the diseases of animals and was full of compassion for them. She was love personified and was loved by all, but alas! the priceless gem was snatched away in the prime of her life. After her demise, she appeared as a vision to one of the disciples of Swamigal and said that she had decided to fulfil the desires of young girls and alleviate the sufferings of those who worshipped her. Ratnammal's picture is being worshipped in the houses of several disciples and her blessings have benefitted many a young girl.

The fame of Ramaswami as a boy of good lineage, born in a good family and bearing an exemplary character, spread in Panimalai and other surrounding places. Sri K. Sasi Sekhara Aiyar, the younger brother of the Zamindar of Kannivadi and its manager appointed him as an accountant in the Zamin. By dint of hard work, he soon rose to the position of a Collector of Revenue and later to the position of Revenue Inspector. Though Ramaswami's body was doing the Zamin's work, his mind was always attuned to God. While in his itinerary he

would always visit Palani. By his divine power he was serving humanity. People recognised in him not an ordinary person, but a ripe gyani leading a family life and a great tapasvin. People began to call Ramaswami Pillai as Swamigal. Ramaswami realised that his primary duty lay in serving humanity. His father Arumugam Pillai also died at this time and the responsibility of the family fell on him. So Ramaswami resigned the job and settled down in Panrimalai.

From then on, Ramaswami came to be known as Sri-La-Sri Panrimalai Swamigal.

The return of Swamigal to Panrimalai as the head of the family added lustre to the place. His compassion, patience and merciful acts converted Panrimalai into a Holy place. He knew how to choose the right person to do a right deed and at the right time so that the benefits could be shared by all. This quality alone was sufficient for the people of Panrimalai to elect him as the President of their Panchayat which post he held for six years. His house became a temple and devotees poured in to worship him at all hours. Swamiji did not forget himself or his devotees or his place or country or the world. As a realised householder he blessed all the people who came to him and gave them peace and happiness. He was always in communion with God. He taught people that one can remain in the family and still be non-attached just like drops of water on a lotus leaf. His duty was service to humanity, he said.

To suit the convenience of his devotees and disciples an ashram named 'Rajaratna Vilas' was built in Dindigal in Tamil Nadu for Swamiji's residence.

In Swamiji's hands and feet are found lines forming a Conch, Chakra, Shatkonam, Sakti Vel, Gyana Vel, the flag and pennant of Muruga and the Trisul which are indicative of his

celestial qualities and greatness. He exudes fragrance and is a living Sat Purusha of the highest order. His childlike simplicity and charm, innate compassion and solicitude for the welfare of the people irrespective of caste, creed, religion or status, his intense desire to relieve the sufferings of people and keep them on their Godward march are well known and evident.

Swamiji performs miracles only to prove that there is a higher spiritual force which guides the destinies of man and to inculcate faith in God in the minds of atheists.

In Swamiji's life hundreds of wonderful things happened and are still happening. To mention only a few:—

Swamiji does puja behind closed doors. An inquisitive host placed an automatic camera inside the puja room to capture the happenings within. Swamiji discovered this and immediately took the yogic pose called 'Sirshasana'. All that the host could discover in the pictures taken by the camera was Swamiji standing upside down in the room!

That Swamiji communed with divinity is proved by a photo taken in Tirupathi in 1964. Swamiji was sitting outside the sanctum sanctorum in the temple of Alamelu Manga Thayar. When the photo was taken, it revealed Swamiji doing puja at the feet of the Deity!

Dr. Schaltanbrandt, a famous Neuro-Surgeon of West Germany, came to Dindigal with his wife to have darshan of Swamiji. When the couple witnessed the miraculous powers of Swamiji they were filled with ecstasy. Swamiji poured Vibhuti into the hands of the Doctor which turned into sugar. The Doctor asked Swamiji for a mantra. Swamiji initiated him but the Doctor could not utter the Tamil words, however much he tried. Swamiji thereupon kept a sheet of white paper in the puja room and at his command the paper came flying

into the hands of the Doctor. When he opened the sheet he was agreeably surprised to find the words of the Tamil mantra written in German Script! The Doctor expressed his profound gratitude to Swamiji for giving him a mantra to meditate upon in his daily prayers.

Quite recently Swamiji visited Vajreshwari, in Bombay. A devotee of the late Swami Nityananda, who was an ex-member of the Legislative Assembly, Maharashtra, prostrated before Swamiji. Swamiji gave him water which turned into rose water in his hands. When the devotee looked at Swamiji's face, he saw instead of Swamiji, his own Guru the late Nityananda. The devotee was overcome with emotion and embraced Swamiji. Another devotee of Swamiji had the vision of Bala Muruga and went into raptures.

On another occasion Swamiji produced Kumkum with akshathai fresh from the temple of Lord Venkateswara at Tirupati, the fragrance of which filled the entire room. Swamiji said that this was a divine miracle which could be performed only when a Siddha had direct communion with God.

Sri Swamiji's teachings will be found in the following chapters. But it is relevant to quote here an oft-repeated saying of his:

"God is sugar candy to those who have faith in Him and a lump of hard stone to those who have no faith."

Swamiji's mission in life is to alleviate the sufferings of humanity and guide the people on their onward march in the spiritual path. Says he:

"I am a devotee of Lord Muruga; I am a servant of Muruga; I am not equal to Tiru Muruga; I am not God. I am doing Sadhana for obtaining divine grace for the good of humanity.

I am also a man like you. I am a servant of Lord Muruga. I am a servant of the people. I want you all to understand this first."

True, Swamiji is a human being, but his innumerable devotees and disciples who have seen the divine attributes in his palms and feet, heard his words of wisdom, witnessed his marvellous deeds and experienced the sanctity of his benign presence, hail him as a divine incarnation.

* THE SAGE OF PANRIMALAI (ii)

Shri Kavi Yogi Maharshi Shuddhananda Bharati

I have seen many Siddhas in my life, including Jnana Siddha of the Agastya Kundam, Purna Siddha, Sai Baba of Shirdi, Siddharuda of Hubli, Ramana Maharshi and Sri Aurobindo. Our Siddhas by a simple Siva Mantra or Rama Mantra released the cosmic force from the soul and taught people how to walk gracefully on this planet.

I had the fortune of meeting such a Siddha in Panrimalai Swamigal. He hails from the sacred hill of Panrimalai in the Palni range of hills and is hence known by that name. The Panrimalai hill is a very venerated place, where Lord Siva Himself is reputed to have taken the shape of a pig and fed the young ones which had lost their mother. I call Panrimalai Swamigal as Namasivaya Siddha, for *Om Namassivaya* is his puissant mantra. This mantra has released the perfect force of Divinity in him and all his acts are controlled by that divine force.

Swamiji's father, Sri Arumugam Pillai, was an ardent Saivite and a devout worshipper of Lord Muruga. His mother, Smt. Angammal, was a very pious soul.

Swamiji was born in the sacred month of Chaitra under the auspicious star of *Bharani*. When his mother was rich with child, a seer predicted that she would give birth to a son like Sri Rama in the month of Chaitra, one with divine attributes who would reign over the hearts of men. A Tamil saying goes that a child aspected by *Bharani* would rule *dharani* (the earth). Hence he was named Ramaswami.

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I was struck by his extraordinary simplicity. He is simple and unostentatious. But he is a great soul who has achieved limitless Divine Grace. His affection for humanity is unbounded. His divine acts have stunned the world. But they are not any legerdemain, jugglery, or ghost-medium thaumaturgy. They are very convincing facts of divinity. They are solely meant to draw people Godward.

Swamiji calls us all 'Swami' and all the womenfolk as 'Amma' (mother). He moves with us sometimes like a child, sometimes like a friend, sometimes like a healer of our afflictions and sometimes like a serious guide or adviser against impending mishaps. But all his words and acts are always meant to kindle in us divine fervour and spiritual aspiration.

This indeed is Panrimalai Siddhar, the simple man with ample divine potentialities. I see a divine light in his eyes and a divine grace in his smiling face. There is a shimmering charm of divinity in his body. He never demands anything but true bhakti from his devotees and by divine grace continues to give and give all that they want.

I had heard about this Siddha Purusha long ago while I was touring Malaya. At that time he was also on a visit to that country. He was staying with the Hon. Minister Sri Sambandham who had been without a child for a long time and had been blessed with a sweet child by Swamiji's Divine Grace. A sceptic asked whether he could bring into being a living thing. From nowhere, Swamiji brought into being within the folded palms of a person, a small cooing bird.

He looks just an ordinary man like us. He does not wear ochre robes nor sport matted locks and beard. He lives the noble life of a Grahastha.

When I went to receive his blessings, he just held my hands and pressed a flower into them. As I opened my hands, I found them to be full with red Kumkum of my favourite deity, Goddess Meenakshi of Madurai.

Another day, he held my hands and lo! they were full of sacred ashes with a divine fragrance. I preserve the ashes even today and their divine fragrance still lingers.

He took me to Tirupathi one day along with his devotees. We all went to the temple and stood in the sanctum sanctorum of Padmavati Devi at Tiruchanoor. Swamiji just touched the ground with his hands and placed them on my palms. I was surprised to see a good quantity of rice and dhal in my hands.

Later we went up the Tirumalai Hills and offered worship before Lord Venkateswara. After darshan, Swamiji invoked the blessings of the Lord. Swamiji just held out his hands and filled the hands of Andhra's Chief Minister with the sacred *prasadam* consisting of cashewnut, raisin, sugar-candy, almond and *mantra akshatha* along with wet sandal paste and *Sripadam*.

Many a time, Swamiji poured into my hands and mouth sugar-candy, grapes and sweet nuts from nowhere. When he wills, his mere touch is enough to diffuse fragrance and his very word is enough to realise anything.

Once I sought Jnana Upadesa from Swamiji. He took a devotee's upper cloth and threw it down and a full cocoanut fell from it. Swamiji then asked me to hold a piece of paper in one of my hands and a pen in the other. A little later he asked me to unfold the paper and lo! a precious and powerful *Ganesa Mantra* was found written on it. Later, when I was chanting the Mantra and offering flowers to Lord Nataraja, a beautiful copper image of Vigneswara was found among the flowers. I keep it in my pooja even today. I had also the vision of Vigneswara and *vibhuthi* came into my hands from nowhere.

Swamiji had also given to Sri K. K. Varma of Travancore a beautiful crystal idol of Lord Vigneswara which was found to be breathing when held firmly in hand.

His divine wonders are devoid of 'I' and 'Mine' egoism; they turn our mind inward and give our heart a 'Godward elan'. He talks less and acts more. His voice is mellow; his gait is slow; but his Divine will is a fast flow of mercy to save devotees.

I was once speaking to him about Lord Muruga and the Vel (spear) that I worship. It is a big and beautiful Vel made of silver with psychic planes distinctly marked on it. Swamiji said, "Your Vel will come flying here, behold". He came out of his room. A huge gathering of devotees watched him. Swamiji prayed "Muruga, kindly bring that Vel . . . Muruga . . . Muruga . . ." Lo! my silver Vel came flying into his hands adorned with chandanam (sandal paste) and kumkum. He handed it to me with his blessings and I take it with me wherever I go and I feel fully protected.

All the divine acts of Swamiji are by the grace of Lord Muruga. I once pleaded with Swamiji to grant the darshan of the holy foot-prints of Lord Bala Muruga. He came out of the room where he was sitting and sat in the hall. There was none in the room. He asked us to place an ordinary sheet of white paper and a plate of turmeric paste in the room. Standing outside the room, Swamiji offered prayers to Lord Muruga and began to sing a soul-thrilling song on Him. After completing prayers, Swamiji fervently called out to Lord Muruga to show his foot-prints. Many heard strange sounds in the room like the tinkling of silver anklets. A few devotees also saw the vision of a peacock in the room. Wonder of wonders, in a few seconds the sheet of paper kept in the room came forth flying into the hands of Swamiji. The paper was wet with the paste of turmeric and on it the holy foot-prints of Lord Bala Muruga were seen. When the wet paper dried, the holy foot prints with all their divine beauty were very clearly visible.

On another occasion, in answer to Swamiji's prayers, the holy footprints (with divine marks) of Bala Muruga were

received on a piece of paper and also the finger-prints of Goddess Shakthi.

In the palms of Swamiji are seen line formations revealing the shapes of *Sangu* (Conch), *Chakram* (Wheel) *Shadkonam*, *Janda* (Flag), *Vel* (spear), *Sakthi Vel* and *Sevarkodi* of Lord Muruga and *Trisul* of Lord Siva. In the inner palms of his feet are seen *Vel*, *Sangu* and *Chakram*. On both his shoulders are seen the marks of *Sangu* and *Chakram*. Besides these, there are also rare marks of divinity on the person of Swamiji. He silently holds the *Chinmudra* of Lord *Dakshinamurthi*, denoting the unity of the Pure Soul with the Pure Divine, when the three stains of egoism, lust and illusion are removed from the mind. *Om Namassivaya* is the formula of his mystic power.

The very life of Swamiji with his consort was an embodiment of all the truths enunciated in the 'Thirukkural'. Like Valluvar's Vasuki, the consort of Swamiji lived a life of perfect womanhood and closely assisted him not only in the family life but also in spiritual life. She by herself, had attained many *Siddhis*. In August, 1965, when she was called to the Lotus Feet of the Lord, her bones and ashes were carried by the devotees for immersion in the various sacred rivers of the country. During the time of immersion of the remains in the holy river near Nasik, devotees found to their surprise that the remains had turned into kumkum (saffron). Similarly devotees, while immersing the remains in the holy waters of river Krishna, found them to be turned into kumkum and turmeric.

This is the Sage of Panrimalai, who leads humanity to realize Divinity. It is the lack of knowledge of the existence of such great Siddhas that has been responsible for the retarded progress of spiritual development in our country.

A Guru like him who never expects anything from his disciples and devotees but tirelessly gives and gives, day and night, all that is prayed for, has never been heard of before. The

many accounts of his having cured by *mantras and vibhuthi* incurable diseases other than those due to *karma*, will fill many pages. He has indeed even granted eye-sight to persons who were born blind, the power of speech to those who were born dumb, and the power of hearing to those who were born deaf.

It is my earnest prayer that atheists, doubting Thomases and afflicted people should come in contact with this Great Sage of Panrimalai and benefit by his teachings, guidance and grace.

HYMN ON SWAMIJI

By his disciple

Shri Kaviyogi Maharshi Shuddhananda Bharati

He is everybody,
He is beyond body,
In heart firmly sit
And you will be fit,
To know His play
In the human clay!

He is far above
The passing time anow!
He descends like a dove
To embrace psychic love—
To draw the loving heart
From worldliness apart,
He plays miracles
Inspiring my canticles!

MARCHONS

(Hymn in French)

Marchons vers la Nouvelle Ere
Soldats du doux Seigneur
Comme un flot etoile
Comme un Printemps aile
Marchons enfants de lumiere'

Sennons les clairons d'or; hissons le grand drapeau
Jetons le cris de gloire au celeste Flambeau

Notre avenir est beau
Par son amour heureau

Notre but est assure
Car son Pouvoir azure
A perfume notre haleine
Notre all gresse est prochaine

Soyons les defenceurs du royaume divin
Un Ciel de verite guide notre destin
Ne coraignons pas l'univers
Ni ses visages divers
Trouvons l'ete dans l'hiver
Et L'Eternel dans la chaire

Le ciel est ici bas; notre terre est en fete
Marchons fils immortels de conquete en conquete

Consacrons notre energie

A Lamour et l' unite

Et faisons la volonte

Du grand Seigneur de l' harmonic

Sa Grace nous conduit Sa Flamme nous protege

Bon courage, O soldats, Marchons en un courtege'

Le joie est dans le travail

La paix est dans la Soumission

Donnons nous-meme en detail

A l' universelle mission

Luttons contre le mal couvrons nous de lauriers

La victoire est en nous; en avant chivaliers!

Sacrifions note amour

Pour l' amour divin ce jour

Sa force est dans notre ame

Et portons son Oriflumme

L' avenir est dans nos mains

Bravo titans surhumaius!

Luttnos contre l' orage et gagnons la victoire

Et vivons l' amis tous dans la nouvelle Histoire

—Shri Kavi Yogi Shuddhananda Bharati

असतो मा सद्गमय
तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय
मृत्योर्माऽमृतङ्गमय

From the unreal lead me to the Real.

From darkness lead me to Light.

From death lead me to Immortality.

— BRIHADARANYAKOPANISHAD.

I. THE HOLY PANCHAKSHARA

In the beginning, it was a void, a limitless vacancy unfilled by anything material. As the Upanishad says 'non-existence alone was in the beginning' (*asadeva idamagra aaseet*). The supreme Reality remained undifferentiated in name and form. Yet it was all-pervading. The material vacuum was yet a spiritual plenum of infinitesimally atomic entities. By their inherent power, they were whirling round at terrific speed holding together in cosmic unity. When, in the process, they rubbed against one another, sound (*naada*) was produced at first. Following sound, light (*bindu*) was emitted. This *naada* and *bindu* constitute *Shiva* and *Shakti*. (The Bible too says: In the beginning was the Word; the Word was with God; and the Word was God.)

From this primordial sound and light arose the first sounds *a u m*. These severally were mystic syllables of meditation (*mantras*). Together they made up *Om*, the *Pranava-mantra*. From *Om* in turn arose the five letters sacred to *Shiva*, the *panchakshara na maha si va ya* which uttered together produced the sound *namassivaaya*.

Each of these letters is endowed with a potency of its own. From the subtle power of that *mantra*, arose the five gross material powers embodied in earth, water, fire, air and ether. The entire universe with its myriad beings moving and un-moving, the numberless stars of the spangled heavens, the planetary bodies that revolve round our sun and round other suns, in fact, everything in the vast cosmos from the most minute to the inconceivably great arose from the combination of these gross powers in various modes.

The five-lettered *mantra* (the *panchakshara*) held in itself the power to preside over and control all these emanations which it manifested in the five-fold forms of creation, preserva-

tion, destruction, concealment and dowering with beneficent grace (*Srishti, sthithi, samhara, virochana* and *anugraha*). In the process, the five letters blossomed into fifty-one sacred sounds. They created among themselves the two powers of attraction and repulsion, the forces of 'aye' and 'nay' leading to their ramification into ninety-six principles from which numberless forces were born. Half of these made for attraction and the other half for repulsion and they permeated the entire cosmos, all that was static and dynamic in it. The universe continues to be a non-stop dance of these primordial and eternal atoms. This is the 'great secret' which lies behind the popular saying: 'Save by Him naught moves in the world.'

It is these dual powers of attraction and repulsion that are responsible for the infinite dualities that appear and function all about us, namely, good and evil, appearance and disappearance, birth and death, day and night, the waxing and waning moon, the darkness before the emergence of the New Moon and the golden orb of the Full Moon, the eclipse of the Sun and of the Moon, cold and heat, thunder and lightning, shadow and sunshine, the breeze and the blizzard, rain and drought, land and water, the life giving oxygen and the death-dealing carbon-dioxide, hill and dale, the potable water and the saline, spring and volcano, the orchard and the desert, the moon and the sun, *pingala* and *idagala*, *poorakam* and *rechakam*, the male and the female, the ambrosia and the poison, health and disease, fragrance and stink, joy and sorrow, kindness and arrogance, laughter and tears, desire and aversion, youth and old age, wakefulness and sleep, physical sight and dream, noise and silence, righteousness and its opposite, knowledge and nescience.

We shall illustrate this truth that sound and light arose from a central basic power and that all else in the universe are emanations of their cooperation and conflict to be traced to the forces of attraction and repulsion.

We use flint stones to produce fire. One flint is held in the right hand and another in the left hand and the former is forcibly brought down from above to come into violent contact with the other raised from below to meet it. When they collide a sound is produced. That is *naadam*. When the process is repeated a number of times, a spark of light arises. That is the *bindu*. On the same analogy, when clouds collide in the sky, first we have the sound of thunder and next the lightning is seen.

Let us think for a moment on electricity which is one of the fundamental cosmic agencies. When a carrier of positive electricity (the force of attraction) and one of negative electricity (the force of repulsion) are brought close together, we hear a crackling sound accompanied by a spark which we are able to see. If they are integrated into a medium into which minute fibres of wire which carry them are twisted together, as in the case of an electric bulb, we have the glow of a brilliant light. By controlling and pressing these forces into service, many mighty things are accomplished.

It is a well-established truth that the Power which is behind all things of the world, the conscious and the unconscious, is a central Principle which mediates between the opposites and holds them in balance. It is common to the moving and the unmoving alike. Unseen outside, it constitutes the very core of every object and of every change. It is present in the inmost being of everything in an immeasurable degree. We too are living beings impregnated with that power. A realisation of this will open up a vista of revealing truth. For verily, the microcosm is an expression of the macrocosm. The cosmic force expanded in the latter lies imprisoned in the former. The macrocosm is this universe; the microcosm is the body.

In the body too, there is a power like electricity that runs through its various parts in the twin aspects of attraction and

repulsion in the forms of our breath, pulse, nerves and muscles, blood and brain. The forces of repulsion and disintegration should be brought under control by the affirmative power of the *atman*; the forces of attraction and integration should be enriched and strengthened. Reason should hold a central place and then one will behold the radiance of the soul. That vision is true spiritual wisdom. 'Self-knowledge alone is true knowledge'; 'He who does not know the self can know nothing else'. To obtain this self-knowledge, one should approach a qualified teacher with becoming humility, be initiated by him into the *moola mantra*, mutter the *panchakshara* in proper style and meditate on its import observing the means prescribed in the method of Yoga. That is the only way to obtain a soul sight of the Supreme Gracious Effulgence (Arulperum Jothi) that permeates everything and everywhere constituting an unbroken Plenum of the Spirit.

II

PANCHAKSHARA: ITS FIVE LIMBS

The Shakti of the Atman permeates every human being born in this world. It is the inmost power, the vital *amrta* springing in the heart and core of human life. Those that have cultivated that power and possess it in abundant measure are the *mahatmas*, the yogis, the *siddha purushas* who have become famous in the world. There is nothing that they cannot accomplish.

Man is the architect of his life. It is given to him to make or mar himself. The ebb and flow of human fortunes are sometimes attributed to past *karma*. Yet destiny can be overcome by man's reason and will. This is possible only for those who gaining control over the disintegrating forces inside their self and outside in the world negate their influence, affirm the forces of integration in their thought and will, establish themselves in a state of equipoise and are set on the path of realising the Divine.

By nature, man is a magnet with life and feeling. The magnetic iron has neither life nor feeling. It can only attract iron which is placed near it. But the human magnet does not stop with this. If the soul-force which is its power of attraction is developed, it can penetrate into the objects, not only of this world, but of numberless worlds beyond and apprehend all things in them. One can translate one's will into action and attain the fruition of accomplishment by that force. No limit can be set to the possibilities of its fulfilment.

The seeds of this soul-force lie dormant in the heart of every one. It must be awakened and developed to execute the purposes of this world and of the worlds beyond.

The physical body is the temple of God. The heart is the sacred sanctum. The lips that utter the sacred Panchakshara



Sri Tatwa Daivam

SRI TATWA DAIVAM

The five letters making up the Panchakshara NA-MA-SI-VA-YA are the names of the Primordial Power that is SADASIVA. They are also identified with the limbs of the human body, for, that macrocosmic power resides in the microcosm of each one of us.

The illustration drawn by Sri-la-Sri Panrimalai Swamigal, depicts:

- ந** i. e. NA न as representing the 2 legs
ம i. e. MA म as representing the stomach
சி i. e. SI शि as representing the 2 shoulders
வ i. e. VA व as representing the mouth
ய i. e. YA य as representing the 2 eyes
encircled by Pranava, AUM.

The sacred letters also represent the five elements that constitute the world, viz. Earth, Water, Fire, Wind and Ether, which, if mastered, culminate in the Pranava Tatwa, AUM.

are the entrance tower. The *atman* of him who has realised this truth is the idol of Siva worshipped in the shrine. The sense organs are the five lamps that are set in that shrine.

The six yogic centres beginning with the "Mooladhara" are based on the truth of the Panchakshara in its different aspects. It is their power that moves the world and fills us with wonder and awe. The esoteric truths of this sacred *mantra* are to be learnt in the privacy of devout discipleship with due humility and fervour.

The five letters making up the Panchakshara are the names of the primordial Power that is Parama Siva. As that macro-cosmic power resides in the microcosm of each one of us, it is possible to get the realisation "I am He" and "He is I", and understand the import of this identification.

In the sacred name *Na-Ma-Si-Va-Ya*, *Na* stands for the two feet, *Ma* for the stomach, *Si* for the two shoulders, *Va* for the mouth and *Ya* for the two eyes. The Siddha saints of old have sung identifying the letters with the limbs of the body. The human frame is the embodiment of that *mantra*.

If you wish to know God, first know thyself. Knowledge of the Self and adoration of it are the ways of Jnana. Hence the command 'know thyself' which must be borne in mind and reflected upon.

The God whom we worship is, in the last resort, the *atman* in us. Though it is true that God dwells in every creature, yet the human body is a superior temple of a distinct kind. 'If I cannot worship in the temple of my heart, no outside temple will ever avail me' said Swami Vivekananda in effect.

This truth will be clear to those whose darkness of ignorance is dispelled by the lamp of their discrimination and wisdom. But, it is not possible to express the ecstasy of those who have realised this truth.

THE SUPREME POWER

The Pranava Mantra OM is the source of the five-lettered Panchakshara NA, MA, SI, VA, YA. From these arose in the order of the letters, the *mahabhutas*, *prithvi* (earth), *ap* (water), *tejas* (fire), *Vayu* (air) and *akasa* (space). Each letter is the foundational power activating the element which originally sprang from it. Thus, the primordial source of the universe, which, not being limited to anywhere, is all pervasive; the Supreme Being referred to by the mantra NA MA SIVAYA is both the source and the sustenance of the entire physical universe.

The entire cosmos in its myriad manifestations is the result of the collocation of these five elements and their inherent forces. There is no object which is outside the orbit of these elements. Everywhere, everything is compacted of them. The entire gamut of causal phenomena is to be traced to their activity.

Each of these five elements contains in itself in different proportions the basis of the sensations of hearing, touch, sight, taste and smell. In NA MA SI VA YA:

Na signifies and enfolds in itself the *Prithvi* element which includes *sabda*, *sparsa*, *rupa*, *rasa* and *gandha*.

Ma relates to the *Ap* element which includes *sabda*, *sparsa*, *rupa* and *rasa*.

Si relates to the *Tejas* element which is connected with *sabda*, *sparsa* and *rupa*.

Va stands for the *Vayu* element characterised by *sabda* and *sparsa*; and

Ya signifies the *Akasa* element which has *sabda* only.

Further, each element is involved as a constituent of every other, thus making $5 \times 5 = 25$ subsidiary centres of activity according to what is called *Sthula panchikarana* and *Sukshma panchikarana*, each accounting for 25 forms of combinations. These fifty powers constitute the dynamics of the entire universe. All the forms of good and evil, of concord and discord that are seen in the world are to be traced to the activities of these main and subsidiary forces in differing proportions and diverse ways.

It is the single original force, that first became two and then many and infinitely manifold. This untold variety is seen for example in the physical features of the countless human beings born in the world. No two men have the same appearance, colour, height, girth, weight, qualities, voice, gait, dress, attitude, marks and lines. The same is the case with all living beings in the world.

Compare any two moving or non-moving objects. Nothing is like any other. Even among things fashioned out of the same dye, there are minute differences in weight, colour and other marks. Even pictures printed off from the newest machines exhibit such minute variations. Photographs from the same negative film or plate are not all identically the same.

The scientific instruments like gramophone plates, tape records, telephones, etc. get frayed by repeated use and by fluctuations of the weather so that there is a decline in their efficiency. The same applies to the radio, the television and the cinematographic films.

Think for a while about our eyes, imbedded in us by God and functioning by His power. One eye does certainly differ from the other in its nature, power and lightness, ever so small as the difference may be.

Thus it is clear that no two things in the universe are identical in form or feature or quality anywhere or at any time.

All these may be apparent to ordinary examination. But these researches point to the fact that as the foundation of all these powers, there is a Supreme Power activating them all. The belief in such a Power is irresistible.

By careful reasoning and patient research it is possible to know the Supreme Being, neither equalled nor excelled by anything else. But it lies hidden underneath and concealed from our view by the five elements of earth, water, air, fire and space. To get behind them, they must be overcome and their power of concealment destroyed by the dagger of the five-lettered *mantra*. The means to do so should be learnt through a qualified Teacher who is competent to instruct about it.

All the objects of the world which we see are subject to birth and death. What we take to be true and lasting turns out to be false and impermanent. Hence the world is spoken of as *maya*.

But what is that which ever remains One without difference? What is that which is not subject to birth or death, but is eternal?

It is that which is beyond the products of *maya*, the One Supreme, without beginning or end, which is not subject to decay or death. That, is God. He is the residual power which remains unaffected when everything else dies away.

THE EFFICACY OF PANCHAKSHARA MANTRA

This is a dynamic universe in which positive and negative energies co-operate to set its myriad activities in motion. The forces emanating in diverse ways from the five primordial elements are the ultimate sources of this dynamism. To bring them under control, to utilise the forces of good and to annihilate those of evil, one has to resort to the Supreme Energy of the five-lettered mystic *mantra*.

To be effective for the transformation of the universe for the good of mankind, this *mantra* has to be received in due process of initiation by an earnest and devout seeker from a competent guru. Reading it by oneself and practising its meditation without proper guidance will be futile of any benefit, and, what is worse, would produce great harm. Any knowledge acquired otherwise than from a guru will give, not light, but darkness.

The seeker must have faith in God and abiding devotion to Him. The Satguru would himself come in quest of him and give him the *upadesa* suited to his capacities. Mutterance and meditation of it in the proper manner will bring extraordinary powers and enable the fulfilment of purposes beyond ordinary mortals.

Different orders in the five-lettered *mantra* have different kinds of efficacies. The order *Na-Ma-Si-Va-Ya* helps to achieve the objectives of this world, while the order *Si-Va-Ya-Na-Ma* dowers one with the desire of the world beyond. These successions of the mystic letters, along with the forms *Si-Va-Ya-Si-Va* and *Si-Va-Si-Va*, enlarged or contracted, if uttered with piety and diligence and in the prescribed manner will beget the grace of God and by it all supernatural powers. So declares the sacred book known as the *Tirumantiram*.

The sacred texts in Tamil identify the five letters of the Panchakshara with different factors of the super-sensible and the sensible world. *Na-Ma-Si-Va-Ya*, these five letters signify respectively *Stambhana*, *Mohana*, *Maarana*, *Ucchaatana* and *Vasya*. In another group, they stand for *Mala*, *Maya*, *Siva*, *Arul* and *Atma* and again for *Waking*, *Dream*, *Sleep*, *Deep Sleep* and *Laya of Life Processes*.

The letter *Si* is central to *Panchakshara mantra*. *Na Ma* and *Va, Ya* stand for the inhaled and exhaled breath. If the breath in its three-fold aspects of *rechaka*, *pooraka* and *kumbhaka* is controlled, canalised and centralised preceded by the mystic syllable *OM*, and if the *mantra* is uttered even once with concentrated devotion it is declared that the floodgates of God *Siva's* grace will be opened wide on the earnest seeker.

The *Sivasakti* packed into the *Panchakshara mantra* permeates this entire universe and is immanent in every particle of it and exhibits itself in the five-fold activities which it engages in by its own grace. These are Creation, Protection, Destruction, Concealment and Beneficence. Five divinities are associated with these five activities, namely *Brahma*, *Vishnu*, *Rudra*, *Maheswara* and *Sadasiva*. In the *mantra*, *Na* stands for *Brahma*, *Ma* for *Vishnu*, *Si* for *Rudra*, *Va* for *Maheswara* and *Ya* for *Sadasiva*.

THE FIVE ELEMENTS AND THEIR COLOURS

These divinities again are looked upon as presiding over the five primordial elements of Earth (*Prithvi*), Water (*Ap*), Fire (*Tejas*), Wind (*Vayu*) and Ether (*Akasa*). These five elements are, in their turn, associated with five colours. They are, in the order of the elements, Golden Yellow, White, Red, Green and Black.

Adopting the methods of Raja Yoga, if one concentrates on the midpoint between his eyebrows withdrawing his senses from external objects, one's internal eye will see an effulgence. On deeper concentration, the five colours will be seen in arresting brilliance. A more intense practice of this process will reveal these colours even in the waking state to the sensuous eye. But one must be wide awake without closing the eyelids even once. That is the height of *yogic sadhana*. These five colours will be seen in every object of the universe.

As you dig deep down into the earth, the colours will be visible in the clay, in the stones and in the minerals. In the vegetable kingdom they may be seen in every tree, plant, creeper, in leaf, flower, fruit and seed. In insects like snakes, worms, fish, frogs, crabs, oysters; in birds like the peacock, the parrot, the cock, the eagle, sparrow, silk worm, crow and crane; in animals like the deer, the tiger, horse, sheep and cow, and also in men these five colours can be seen singly or in combination. The sky shows these colours at sunrise, at sunset and in the rainbow. In short, there is nothing in this vast world which does not exhibit these five-fold colours.

The five colours are symbolic of the powers of the five primordial elements. Hence it is that the ancient Tamils adorned themselves with jewels set with five-coloured gems

strung on five-coloured threads. They also used to wear five-coloured garments. The belief was that by such adornment and attire they could acquire the powers of the respective elements warding off evil and obtaining whatever is auspicious and good.

Another time-honoured practice based on this belief was to cook rice, make it into five balls of different colours, scoop each ball into a hollow and light a wick in it. These five lamps will be waved clockwise and counter-clockwise each thrice before persons suspected of affliction by evil spirits and then the lights are thrown out on a trijunction of roads.

The 'harathi' to ward off the evil eye is made of five ingredients. They are (1) Turmeric powder standing for the yellow *prithvitattva*, (2) Calcium (Chunam) for the white *aptattva*, (3) Chillies for the red *tejotattva*, (4) Betel-leaf for the green *Vayutattva*, and (5) Charcoal symbolising the dark *akasatattva*. The liquid with these thrown into it is likewise waved thrice clockwise and counter-clockwise, the index finger of the person waving it is dipped into it and a *tilak* of that liquid is impressed on the forehead of the person who is the subject of this proceeding. Then the whole thing is emptied in the street in front of the house.

The yellow associated with *Na* in the *mantra* has primacy over the other colours. Hence it is that the lime-fruit is used in worship of God. The lime-fruit is also used by *maantrikas* in their practices. When one goes to see superior personages like the guru, the king, the saint or any other big person, one takes a lime-fruit and respectfully offers it to him and it is accepted with pleasure.

The turmeric root has an excellence all its own. It is a bounty conferred on man by God. As a preventive against all kinds of ailments and evil eyes, our women generally smear






their faces, hands and feet with turmeric paste during their daily bath.

Yellow is the colour signifying auspiciousness. The *mangala sutra* in a wedding is yellow in colour. The *kankana* tied round the wrist at every holy function is also of yellow thread. These are traditions established by our ancients for our prosperity.

THE FIVE ELEMENTS AND THEIR GEOMETRICAL FORMS

NA-MA-SI-VA-YA make up the five-lettered *Panchakshara*. These letters stand for the five elements that constitute the world, the Earth, the Water, the Fire, the Wind and the Sky. A particular colour is associated with each of them—yellow for the Earth, white for Water, red for Fire, green for Wind and black for the Sky.

The five elements were invested with five geometrical forms by the Supreme Creatrix, the Parasakti. They are as follows:

1. Prithvi or Earth is represented by a square 
2. Ap or Water is represented by a crescent 
3. Tejas or Fire is represented by a triangle 
4. Vayu or Wind is represented by a double triangle 
5. Akasa or Sky is represented by a sphere 

It may be objected that the Earth which is a sphere cannot be represented by a square. It is true that the Earth is round. But the globe which is the Earth includes the oceans and the land. The watery expanse comes under the *Ap* element. Taking away that part from the globe, the rest of it, the land part, has to be considered here. It is only while standing on the land that we can point to the four directions. The lines pointing to these directions make up the four sides of a square.

Moreover, Brahma who is the creator has four faces. He is called the *Chaturmukha Brahma*. Each *mukha* faces one of the

directions, East, South, West and North. So *prithvi*, which is the source of all creation and growth stands for the truth which signifies the four directions. *Ap* or water is symbolised by a crescent. This is got by confining attention to the watery portion of the globe excluding the land portion.

Tejas or Fire is represented by a triangle. When fire is ablaze, the base is broader than the apex which tapers to a point.

Vayu or Wind is represented by double triangle. When wind blows, fire glows as triangle in the form \triangle . But when the wind blows down from the top, the figure is reversed and is of the form ∇ . When the two triangular forms are placed one above the other, we get the diagram \star signifying that the wind blows in all six directions. The upper triangle is looked upon as standing for the *Siva-tattva* and the lower one for *Sakti-tattva*. The two together make up the life breath and energise all life.

Akasa is represented by a circle. Dust rises from the earth. Steam issues from water. Smoke emanates from fire. These combine and go in the ten directions. They rise into the sky, mix with the powers of the five elements, whirl round in a circle and are in a constant circular motion.

In this universe, everything from the atom to the spheres is round. Everything turns round itself and round every other thing. These motions are controlled in the infinite space by the *Parasakti* Herself by Her innate power. That *Sakti* is symbolised by the circle. All things in the cosmos produced by the action of the atoms are in essence circular.

For example, cut card-boards to the pattern of the figures symbolising the *pancha-bhutas*, the five elements. Make a hole in the centre of each and send a thick wire into each hole. Make

them turn round after the manner of paper kites. It will be seen that the square, semi-circle, the triangle, the double triangle and the circle will all turn round in a circular form. Everything will appear circular.

Or look at the sunlight falling on the ground through the interstices of a pandal made of the matting of cocoanut leaves. The holes may be of any shape or form; square, rectangle, circle or any other irregular figure. But the sunlight falling on the ground through them is circular in all cases. So everything is essentially circular. Everything is enveloped by the grand circle which is the universe.

Those who engage in such researches, will obtain true scientific knowledge. Knowledge of ultimate Reality will dawn on them.

Moreover, like the custom of wearing a necklace of stones of five colours associated with the *panchabhutas*, it was the practice among our ancients to fashion the five diagrammatic forms in stones of five colours, thread them together and wear them as an ornament round the neck. Those who practise magic and other *siddhis* are also known to have adorned themselves likewise.

If one goes through the discipline of Raja Yoga for a number of years by the method of *pranayama* instructed by a *Guru* and with self-confidence, in addition to seeing the five colours of the elements with his physical eyes, he can also perceive the five geometrical forms which symbolise them. Each figure can be seen in the five colours.

Such achievements are the features of the way of *tattva-jnana*. In course of time, such *siddhis* will achieve liberation by the grace of the *Guru*.

15 VOWELS AND 36 CONSONANTS

Tamil Nadu in the South is the most ancient and bountiful part of the country. What with fertile lands, plentiful water, immense manpower, resourceful language, divine qualities and the highest traditions of Guru-disciple relationship, Tamil Nadu was, is and will be contributing the maximum good and serve as a beacon to the whole world. It is again in Tamil Nadu that we witness the rare phenomenon of 'Senthamil' i.e., the ancient Tamil language and the Holy Saivism inextricably uniting with each other as body and soul and subsisting with wonderful capacity. The ancient scholars who had carried out extensive researches of the Tamil words carved out on stones, are of the opinion that originally the Tamil letters were in the form of figures and as times passed, the form changed into curves, then into circles and still later into squares.

The research scholars have come to the conclusion that during the times the curve and circle forms of representation were in vogue, there were 15 vowels and 36 consonants, making a total of 51 letters in the Tamil language. Later, after the era of the great epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, the square form of representation came into existence, comprising of the twelve vowels अ, आ, इ, ई etc., the eighteen consonants क, ख, च, ज etc. and the 'Ayudha' letter . . ., making a total of 31 letters. These 31 letters were named 'Senthamil' and are in usage even to this day. We therefore belong to the age of square letters.

'Tirumantiram' which is the most ancient and the greatest of spiritual writings in Tamil containing a wealth of knowledge and truths emanated from the Siddha of Siddhas, Tirumoola Munivar, seven to eight thousand years ago, according to the research scholars. Since those were the days of round letters

the 51 letters comprising of 16 vowels and 35 consonants then prevalent were used in writing the *magnum opus* 'Tirumantiram' in 3,000 stanzas. The 'Tirumantiram' is the first and foremost authoritative Tamil scripture dealing with the *Vedas* and the *Vedagamas*. Closely observing the similar and dissimilar nature of the sounds originally emanating from the primeval supreme force manifesting as an infinitesimal particle of an atom and imbibing their power, the *Tatwa Jnanis* or sages of wisdom, have evolved the 51 letters capable of producing cause and effect by their utterances. The Tamil Siddhas have therefore been pronouncing these 51 letters as sound producing *mantras*, dividing these letters into 16 vowels and 35 consonants according to their differential qualities.

Out of the 35 Tamil consonants five letters are very powerful and strong. They are NA-MA-SI-VA-YA, the Panchakshara. It is this Panchakshara which is the *moola mantra* for all the *mantra* letters. It is like the mother to all *mantras*. Among the 16 vowels the most prominent letters are the five letters अ, इ, उ, ए, ओ (a, e, u, i, o) which when merged with the consonants constitute their life force. That the powers of these 51 letters coupled with the powers of the Panchabhutas permeate the macrocosm and the microcosm is an established truth.

According to Sri Tirumoolar, the author of the immortal 'Tirumantiram' the most sacred *mantra* OM with 15 vowels and 35 consonants constitute the 51 letters. The letter SI representing the Light—Jyoti—with its six facets constitutes the six Adharas in our body viz. Mūladhara, Swadhisthana, Manipura, Anahata, Visuddha and Ajna. The six inward stages of the Jyoti are to be realised by awakening the Pranava Nada—OM—through the initiation of the Guru.

51 LETTERS: 5 KINDS OF NUMBERS

Out of the 51 Tamil letters, five letters are very great and powerful. They are NA-MA-SI-VA-YA, the Panchakshara. They are the moola mantra letters. According to the doctrines of the ancient Siddhas, the five letters NA-MA-SI-VA-YA represent the Holy name and the visual embodiment of Parama Siva. The powers of the 51 letters, the powers of the 96 Tatwas and the powers of the Panchabhutas spring from the powers of the Panchakshara and permeate the microcosm and the macrocosm. Therefore the Panchakshara NA-MA-SI-VA-YA is the common basic mantra for Vedanta, Siddhanta, knowledge of the Tatwas, True knowledge and the like.

It is an open secret that very many *itihasas*, puranas, kavyas, art drawings, sculptures etc. created by the intellectuals contain the essence of the principles and greatness of the Panchakshara Saktis. "The blind habit of praising as reality the works of art created by imagination must find its grave"—says Sri Ramalinga Swamikal. The ignorant see with their physical eyes the various forms of stone images created by the artists based on the episodes depicted in the *itihasas*, puranas and the kavyas, do obeisance to them, glorify them and consider that to be the divine state. They should not rest content with this. They should go beyond these created forms and by dint of research, understand the esoteric meaning thereof and through gyana yoga sadhana realise the one eternal Supreme Jyoti with the eyes of knowledge. The knowledge so gained by research into the Holy Panchakshara serves as a beacon light to the right path.

Of what use is book knowledge? Apart from the study of books, the seeker should gain practical experience by learning the truth at the feet of the Satguru through his teachings. The first duty is therefore to prepare oneself to become a fit disciple

of the guru. A good ripe disciple will have the good fortune of automatically getting the right guru. This is the guru-disciple tradition. The Holy *Tirumantiram* lays down that the name of Nandi is Namasivaya. Nandi is Siva. The Omkara Pranava Panchakshara is the embodiment in principle of Parama Siva. For this reason all the boundless powers permeating the microcosm and the macrocosm could be found in the Holy Panchakshara. There is no other mantra equal to the Holy Panchakshara. The ancient Tamil Siddhas made use of the letters of the Panchakshara by lengthening or shortening the metres (matras), transposing them, subtracting or adding thereto and pronouncing them with varying degrees of emphasis to achieve the desired effect. For example, Namasivaya is pronounced as Namassivaaya and Sivayanama as Sivaayanama and such practice has been in vogue for a long time. The effect of the pronunciation in either way is both in principle and content the same. For the worship or aradhana of Siva the twin paths of right conduct and right speech are indicated in the holy text *Tirumantiram*. The best archana to Siva is to change the Panchakshara into (1) Namasivaya (2) Sivayanama (3) Sivaya-siva and (4) Sivasiva and to pronounce them in these four different ways and getting them by heart with reverence. This is called the process of converting copper into gold. That is, the dross of desire and attachment to the physical body (copper) is removed through the efficacy of the most potential *moola mantra* the Panchakshara and the body becomes of the colour of gold (Jyoti). In other words the Jiva becomes Siva. This is the doctrine of the ancient siddhas borne out by their experience.

The 51 numbers representing the five lettered Panchakshara is divided by the intellectuals into five groups covered by the numbers 9, 11, 4, 15 and 12. These five-fold divisions representing the 35 consonants and 16 vowels control all the saktis or forces and bound by the Panchakshara permeate the microcosm and macrocosm, thus bringing into being the eternal existence.

IX

SARVA SAKTHI CHAKRA

It is the powers of the Panchabhutas that reflect as the basic helpful support for the harmonious working of the manifold forces represented by the Holy Panchakshara NA-MA-SI-VA-YA, being the most powerful of the 35 consonants; अ, इ, उ, ए, ओ (a, e, u, i, o) the five prominent life giving letters of the 16 vowels in Tamil language; the Omkara Pranava mantra and the 96 Tatvas.

The Seeker should get himself initiated by a Satguru into Siva Raja Yoga which contains within itself:

(1) The Panchabhutas or five elements, namely—

Prithvi or Earth represented by a square □

Ap or Water represented by a crescent ∪

Tejas or Fire represented by a triangle △

Vayu or Wind represented by a double triangle ☆

Akasa or Sky represented by a sphere ○

(2) The colours associated with each of the Panchabhutas or five elements, namely, yellow, white, red, green and black respectively;

(3) The 51 letter mantras;

(4) Omkara Pranava Panchakshara mantras, and

(5) Their central abodes, namely, the six adharas (Yogic centres).

After initiation, he should practise the yoga in the manner prescribed and attain perfection. If the above mentioned letters charged with mantrasakthi are chanted the requisite number of times with single pointed deep meditation, without mistake and in the proper order, the fruition of the mantra will yield wonderful benefits leading to success in this life and beyond.

The Panchabhutas which are the basis for the potency of all mantra letters are represented by the mantra sakthi letters लं, वं, रं, यं, अं, (Lam-Vam-Ram-Yam-Am) or ल, व, र, य, अ, (La-Va-Ra-Ya-A). These mantra sakthi letters are called the *Bija mantras*. *Bija* means seed.

The Holy Panchakshara NA-MA-SI-VA-YA is the moola mantra. Moola means root. As the central basis for all mantra sakthis like the taproot, it is capable of enabling one to attain the Eternal State.

What is the *Sarvasakthi Chakra*? It is a chakra in which:

- (1) the five letters NA MA SI VA YA representing the moola mantra Panchakshara;
- (2) the five letters of the Vowels अ, इ, उ, ए, ओ, (a, e, i, o, u) which give life to the Panchakshara;
- (3) the five forms representing the Panchabhuta Tatvas, namely, the square, crescent, triangle, double triangle and sphere;
- (4) the mantra letters representing the Panchabhuta Sakthis लं, वं, रं, यं, अं, (Lam-Vam-Ram-Yam-Am) and
- (5) the five Tamil numerals 9, 11, 4, 15 and 12 representing the five-fold division of the 51 powerful letters;

are all computed, arranged and written at the appropriate places within the (5x5) 25 squares divided by the ancient Sid-

dhas and Munis in accordance with the injunctions laid down in Sastras and all of which are compressed within a single circle.

The Sarvasakthi Chakra, when inscribed on gold, silver or copper sheet without any error in the order, can be said to be a Yantra or Raksha. It is a well-established doctrine that by worshipping this Chakra in the prescribed manner, evils will be warded off and all beneficent results will flow.

The significance of the doctrines contained in the Tatvas embodied in the Chakras and their great boundless powers should be learnt by the disciple through the Upadesa of the Guru. Thereafter, placing the Chakra before him, he should chant with devotion and perseverance the Panchakshara mantras without any mistake in their order as many times as possible every day. To the extent to which he increases the number of times of their recital, to that extent he will achieve abundant strength and powers, capable of producing the desired beneficial results.

The worship of any Chakras not drawn in the proper order and given by a person who has not been properly initiated into the correct methods of their structure by the Satguru will not only not yield any beneficial result but will bring unexpected evil results. This fact should be carefully noted and remembered by all. Such a wrong step would tantamount to walking on the head instead of legs.

All born as human beings, who are endowed with the power of discrimination, owe it as their duty to praise and worship all the forces which are permeating the macrocosm and the microcosm. The macrocosm is the Universe and the microcosm is our physical body. 'That which is in the Universe is also contained in the body'—is the sublime Truth. The realisation that all these forces are also existing in our body and permeating it is Tatvagyaana.

The *Tatva Gyani* who has thus realised himself, experiencing all the forces of the *Tatvas* in his own body without a shadow of doubt, can form these forces into *Chakras* and mentally proceed with the worship of himself, constantly repeating the *Panchakshara* mantras in the prescribed manner. By this process, he achieves all *siddhis* for his own self in conformity with both *Vedanta* and *Siddhanta* and reaches the supreme ripe state.

X

THE FIVE ELEMENTS AND 96 TATWAS

In the beginning the Paramatman existed indivisible in the all-pervading Eternal Void from the molecular atoms to the highest. These countless millions of atoms were whirling round at terrific speed in cosmic unity. In this process of revolution, clashes took place between the atoms, and sound (*naada*) was first produced. The process still continuing, light (*bindu*) was emitted.

From this primordial sound and light (*naada* and *bindu*), the three original sounds A-U-M emerged as AUM and became the cause of the Omkara Pranava *mantra*. Again from this Omkara Pranava *mantra* emerged the root words NA-MA-SI-VA-YA, the Panchakshara, which again blossomed into 51 sacred letters. From the subtle power of OM NAMASIVAYA were evolved the many forces that are the 96 Tatwas, including the five elements which created and sustained the macrocosm and the microcosm by their grace.

The ultimate revelation of the Siddhas is the knowledge "that which is in the macrocosm is in the microcosm". The macrocosm is the universe and the microcosm is the body.

Thus the primordial Paramatman with the basis of the *panchabhutas* and the 96 Tatwas, has become the moving force of the universe as well as the body. So long as these 96 Tatwas are embedded in the body, man is capable of enjoying happiness or undergoing suffering. When these 96 Tatwas (forces) cease to exist in the body, the man dies and returns to dust. "Death in the physical is birth in the astral" is the truth left behind by our ancients and is well worth pondering over.

"Leaving aside the God within who controls the five elements and 96 Tatwas in your body, you have gone a wandering

around the world; casting aside untrue physical attachments and looking up to the true being, realising the Centre where the five senses merge, enjoy the bliss within."

Thus the Tamil Siddhas have sung and brought home the truth for everyone to realise.

One should therefore abandon material desires, receive proper initiation from a Sat Guru, concentrate the mind, intellect and the life-force through the medium of Siva Yoga, on the spiritual centre between the eyebrows and meditate. If this is done, he will experience the quintessence of the Tatwas of the Panchakshara, see the effulgent light through the spiritual eye and realise God as the Supreme Bliss and indwelling Glory.

The 96 Tatwas are:

- 5 Bhutas (Primordial Elements): Earth, Water, Fire, Wind and Ether.
- 5 Jnana Indriyas (Organs of knowledge or perception): Skin, Tongue, Eyes, Nose and Ears.
- 5 Qualities: Deva (Divinity), Dana (Charity), Visarga (Renunciation), Ananda (Bliss) and Bhaya (Fear).
- 5 Koshas (Sheaths): Annamaya (Physical), Pranamaya (Vital), Manomaya (Mental), Vigyanamaya (Supramental) and Anandamaya (Spiritual).
- 5 Asayas (Receptacles of the body): Amara (Mouth), Pakva (Stomach), Mala (Intestines), Jala (Kidneys) and Sukla (Seminal Vesicles).
- 5 Pulan (Functions): Sabda (Hearing), Sparsa (Touch), Rupa (Sight), Rasa (Taste) and Gandha (Smell).
- 4 Karanas (Intellectual Faculties): Manas (Mind), Buddhi (Intellect), Chitta (Subconscious Mind) and Ahamkara (Ego).
- 3 Trigunas (Qualities): Sattwa (Purity), Rajas (Activity) and Tamas (Inertia).

- 3 Malas (Vital deterrents): Anavam (Pride), Maya (Illusion) and Kamyam (Selfish desire).
- 5 Karmendriyas (Organs of action): Vak (Speech), Pani (Hands), Pada (Legs), Payu (Anus) and Upastha (Genitals).
- 8 Ragas (Attachments): Kama (Desire), Krodha (Anger), Lobha (Covetousness), Moha (Infatuation), Mada (Arrogance), Matsarya (Jealousy), Idumbai (Fear) and Vegam (Haste).
- 10 Nadis (Astral Nerves): Ida, Pingala, Sushumna, Sankhini, Pusha, Gandhari, Agni, Alambhusa, Singuva and Guna.
- 6 Adharas (Yogic Centres): Muladhara, Swadishtana, Manipura, Anahata, Visuddha and Ajna.
- 3 Mandalas (Worlds): Agni, Aditya and Chandra.
- 5 States (Avasthas): Jagriti (Waking), Swapna (Dream), Sushupti (Sleep), Turiya (Deep Sleep) and Athi Turiya (Laya of Life Process).
- 3 Doshas (Humours of the Body): Vata (Wind), Piththa (Bile) and Sleshma (phlegm).
- 3 Eshanas (Desires): Artha (Wealth), Putra (Son) and Loka (Wife).
- 10 Vayus (Nerve currents or Pranas): Prana, Apana, Vyana, Udana, Samana, Naga, Kurma, Krikara, Devadatta and Dhananjaya.
- 2 Vinai (Actions): Nal Vinai (Good Deeds) and Thee Vinai (Bad Deeds).
- 1 Knowledge.

96 Total

“To the realised He is sweet sugar-candy; to others He is a lump of hard stone”—understanding this, one should realise the truth.

"Know Thyself" is the quintessence of the teachings of our Vedantic seers.

One who, guided by a Sat Guru, understands the above 96 Tatwas and the rest of it embedded in the body realises God as the Eternal Truth and becomes a *Tatwa Gyani*. The *Tatwa Gyani* is thus one who has understood the secret forces at work, based on the Truth "I am He" and "He is I".

"Where there is Tatwa, there the Leader is; Where the Tatwa is not, there the Leader is not".

This is the ultimate philosophy left behind by the great Tamil Siddhas of the past and the realisation comes that "Truth is God."

"Realisation of the True God is Sada Siva;
All other states are Illusory."

XI

THE 51 SACRED LETTERS AND 6 ADHARAS

If one has to realise the divine qualities of the primordial force, he should, through the Pranayama Yoga Sadhana as initiated by the Guru, wake up the *Kundalini* force (serpentine power) lying dormant in the Muladhara, with the aid of Ida, Pingala and Sushumna *nadis* and make the force shoot upward through all the six Adharas, and concentrating at the space between the two eye-brows visualise through the spiritual eye. He will then realise the true divine qualities.

The *Kundalini* Shakti is a great and marvellous subtle power residing in the Muladhara in the centre of the body in the form of a coiled serpent, always in slumber.

There are 72,000 *nadis* (astral nerves) in the human body. Of these 24 are important. They are situated in the Muladhara—10 *nadis* upwards, 10 *nadis* downwards, and two *nadis* each on either side. These *nadis* with manifold powers are separated and unified in the Muladhara and are utilised by the *Kundalini* force according to its needs as the main force. Of the above 24 *nadis*, 10 are most important and out of these 10 *nadis* three are fundamental, viz Ida, Pingala and Sushumna. Ida is the breath which flows (incoming and outgoing) through the left nostril, Pingala through the right nostril and Sushumna through both the nostrils. Ida is also called as Chandra Nadi. Pingala as Surya Nadi and Sushumna as Agni.

The six Adharas are (1) Muladhara (2) Swadhishtana (3) Manipura (4) Anahata (5) Visuddha and (6) Ajna.

Muladhara: This Adhara is located in the centre of the body, at the base of the spinal column, four fingers in length and four fingers in width. This is the base where

the Kundalini force is in slumber like a three coiled serpent. It looks like a lotus with four petals, that is, a place where four different forces of the *nadis* are separated and unified as determined by the Yogis. The sacred mantra OM of the Omkara Pranava Panchakshara OM NAMASIVAYA has its origin here. Ganapati is the Devata with four *mantraaksharas* (sacred letters).

Swadhishtana: This Adhara is located below the navel. It looks like a lotus with six petals, that is, a place where six different forces of the *nadis* are separated and unified, as determined by the Yogis. This is located above the Muladhara and is known as Kanda. The Prithvi (Earth) Tatwa prevails. Colour is golden yellow. Geometrical form is square □. Bija Mantra (significant potential equivalent) is LAM. It is the centre of the Panchakshara *mantra* letter NA. Presiding deity is Brahma with six *mantraaksharas*. Duty is Creation.

Manipura: The Adhara is located in the Nabhithana (region of navel). It looks like a lotus with ten petals, that is, a place where ten different forces of the *nadis* are separated and unified as determined by the Yogis. The AP (Water) Tatwa prevails. Colour is white. Geometrical form is Crescent ☾. Bija *mantra* is VAM. It is the centre of the Panchakshara *mantra* letter MA. Presiding deity is Vishnu with ten *mantraaksharas*. Duty is Protection.

Anahata: This Adhara is located in the heart centre. It looks like a lotus with twelve petals, that is, a place where twelve different forces of the *nadis* are separated and unified, as determined by the Yogis. The Tejas (Fire) Tatwa prevails. Colour is red. Geometrical form is triangle △. Bija *mantra* RAM. It is the centre of the Panchakshara *mantra* letter SI. Presiding deity is Rudra with 12 *mantraaksharas*. Duty is Destruction.

Visuddha: This Adhara is located in the throat. It looks like a lotus with sixteen petals, that is, a place where sixteen different forces of the *nadis* are separated and unified, as determined by the Yogis. The Vayu (Wind) Tatwa prevails. Colour is green. Geometrical form is double triangle ☆ Bija mantra is YAM. It is the centre of the Panchakshara mantra letter VA. Presiding deity is Maheshwara with sixteen *mantraaksharas*. Duty is Concealment.

Ajna: This Adhara is located at the space between the two eyebrows. It looks like a lotus with two petals, that is, a place where two different forces of the *nadis* are separated and unified as determined by the Yogis. The Akasa (Ether) Tatwa prevails. Colour is black. Geometrical form is Sphere O. Bija mantra is UM. It is the centre of the Panchakshara mantra letter YA. Presiding deity is Sadasiva with two *mantraaksharas*. Duty is Beneficence.

According to Sri Tirumoolar, the author of the immortal 'Tirumantiram', the most sacred mantra OM with 15 vowels and 35 consonants constitute the 51 letters.† The six inward stages of the Light—Jyoti—are to be sought with the help of the Pranava Nada—OM.

† In Sri Tirumoolar's time the ancients had 15 Vowels in the Tamil language.

SIVA RAJA YOGA: GURU—DISCIPLE RELATIONSHIP

What is Siva Raja Yoga? It is the path which leads, through Pranayama, practised with dispassion and perseverance, to the realisation of the Jyoti (Supreme Light) which is the quint-essence of the Holy Panchakshara NA-MA-SI-VA-YA.

It is an established principle that a disciple, having the highest devotion to his Guru—the Guru being a realised saint with all the Grace—can attain Siddhi (attainment) through the Guru's Upadesa (initiation) with many years of systematic and persistent Yoga Sadhana (Yogic practice).

The great Tamil ancients have said that "There cannot be any ideal State which is not that of a householder." Hence the householders are the best among those qualified for Siva Raja Yoga. The man and the woman are both equal in this respect.

THE GURU: Qualities he should possess:

The Guru (Master) who initiates one into the Path of Siva Raja Yoga should be a perfect self-realised soul, capable of conveying his ideas not only by means of words, but also by signs and action, transcending all emotions and centred in peace. He should have mastered and brought under his control the innumerable forces emanating from the Holy Panchakshara Mantra and his Yoga Sadhana, and must have also reached the highest pinnacle of the Path. He must be in a position to select fit and proper disciples and instruct them on the Onward Path in clear and easily understandable terms; each according to his individual stage of evolution. These are the qualifications laid down in the ancient Tamil texts.

THE DISCIPLE: Qualities he should possess:

The disciple should be pure. He should have no deformities in his body. He should be full of Satwic qualities. He should have conquered anger. He must have faith in his own conscience and must excel in devotion to his Guru. He must be capable of understanding and following the Guru's veiled instructions, enjoying the confidence of the Guru, obeying and serving his parents and leading a chaste, monogamous householder's life. The disciple endowed with the above qualities laid down for a true disciple, is alone fit enough according to ancient Tamil texts, to be initiated into Siva Raja Yoga.

Such a worthy disciple should be in search of a Guru possessing all the divine qualities, and after finding one, he should surrender his all—body, possessions and soul—at the lotus feet of the Guru, please him in all ways, justify the Guru's faith in him, imbibe the forces emanating from the Guru's teaching of the Omkara Pranava Panchakshara OM NA-MA-SI-VA-YA and adhere to the practice of Yoga with full faith and perseverance in his efforts. When doubts arise, he should get them cleared from the Guru by repeated requests and evolve himself with the benign thoughts of the Guru all the time.

Songs of Tamil Siddhas conveying the above ideas are not wanting in the ancient Tamil texts.

According to the legacy left behind by the Tamil Ancients:

"The Master and God are one and inseparable; the One who imparts the Sacred Letters is God; the Guru who blesses the disciple with the upadesa of Omkara Pranava Panchakshara and the 51 Sacred Letters etc. becomes equal to God."

There is a wonderful and excellent old Tamil saying:

"No Mantra is greater than the word of the Father".
(Here "Father" means the Great Siva who has created us all

and "the word" means NA-MA-SI-VA-YA. This is not only the name of the Lord but the principle behind His Form signifying the Omkara Pranava Panchakshara).

THE SUPREMACY OF THE MANTRA:

The Omkara Pranava Panchakshara Mantra OM NA-MA-SI-VA-YA is superior to all Mantras. It possesses unparalleled powers. No Mantra can equal or surpass this Mantra. This is the Truth.

The great saintly authority, *Sri Tirumoolar* says thus:

"There is a beautiful fruit to the world; it is a good one and its name is NA-MA-SI-VA-YA; when chewed it is soft; but when eaten it is sweetness itself."

LONG LIVE NA-MA-SI-VA-YA!

LONG LIVE THE LOTUS FEET OF THE LORD!

2. THE WAY TO GOD

God is sweet sugar-candy to those who have faith in Him; but a lump of hard stone to those who do not have that faith.

Among God's creations, only an infinitesimal portion of human beings pine to see Him face to face. The rest are immersed in the miasma of material comforts. They are in hot, meaningless pursuit of sensuous, transient pleasures. They seldom stop to dwell on the All-Merciful, All-Pervading God—He who is devoted to the devotees; He who slaves for His slaves. Man's history is studded with shining instances of God descending on earth in the service of His devotees.

The Puranas tell us how Mother Earth, unable to bear the burden of the growing number of selfish and sinful mortals, appealed to God to destroy the erring ones.

Human birth is a precious, priceless blessing of the Lord. We are born after passing through endless cycles of births and deaths as a result of good conduct and unswerving devotion to the Lord. It, therefore, ill-becomes human genius to waste this glorious opportunity on earth: the duty before mankind is clear—to realise the purpose of life by devotion to God. This is the quintessence of the teachings of all the Minstrels—Acharyas and Sages—whom God sends on earth from time to time.

Saint Sivagnana Siddhi compares human birth to the crossing of an ocean with one's own hands. Man can cross the ocean of life too by devotion to God. It is an oft-proven truth.

Love and attachment limited to one's kith and kin and identification with one's body are all alike the offsprings of ignorance. Ignorance is the root cause of fear, strife and misery. Such ignorance hardly distinguishes the human from the lower species. It is only the knowledge of the Divine that will stave

off this dangerous and self-devouring ignorance and elevate man from the animal to the spiritual status.

Immortality is the birthright of all. Divine Consciousness is the most precious heritage of mankind. Every soul is potentially Divine. Indeed God dwells in the hearts of each one of us. Unfortunately, blinded by fleeting passions, the minds of most men do not rest on Him.

What then is the way to God?

Man develops his mind in proportion to his love of God and God's grace descends on him in the same proportion—the greater the measure of his "in-dwelling" in God, the greater will be the grace of God which will ultimately release man from the shackles of births.

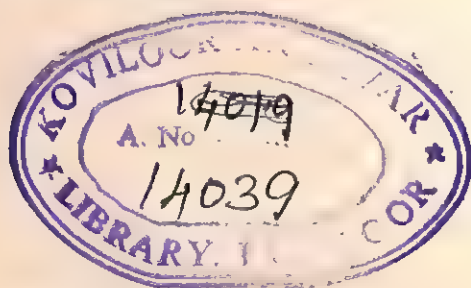
To earn God's grace, Suddha Bhakti (unalloyed devotion) is necessary. With Suddha Bhakti comes Atma Suddhi (purity of the soul). When the soul becomes pure, one gets Viveka (discretion) and Vairagya (non-desire), its other gifts being Sat Sanga (sacred company of the righteous), Sadhu Seva (service of the saintly), Nama Śamkīrtan (singing the Lord's praises) and Satya (truthfulness)—all of which result in overflowing Bhakti or boundless devotion to God, which in its turn will lead to Siddhi or attainment which in turn will lead to Mukti or liberation. Man in the liberated state realises Atman which will lead to the knowledge of God—Prakṛiti or Paramatman. Love will then radiate in all its effulgence from the inside and outside. Verily such a one becomes God-man, shedding all human limitations and transcending good and evil. He becomes the instrument of God and sees Him in all and all in Him.

One important fact to remember in this connection is that the supreme grace of the Siddhas and Yogis will ease and

quicken the pace of man's evolution towards God-realisation and help him attain it with lesser effort. But even though God and the Guru may be too willing to open the floodgates of God-Knowledge, if man has no urge to attain Bhakti or see the Lord, nothing can help him. Humility and self-surrender are its prime prerequisites.

Man is God's creature. He has in his own right to make ceaseless efforts to know things. What he does not know he must learn from others who know. He must seek and learn from an enlightened Guru.

I repeat what I said in the beginning. God is sweet sugarcandy to those who have faith in Him; but a lump of hard stone to those who do not have that faith. This is my experience. Let everyone make it his mission to propagate devotion to God to the best of his ability. May humanity strive for the nectar of Bhakti and through it attain and enjoy Shanti and Shreyas (peace and prosperity).



3. THE ULTIMATE TRUTH

Life in the universe is an ageless, unending, multi-facet interplay of the Lord's *leelas*. Numerous are the places the world over which have seen the divine manifestation in one form or the other. India—Bharat Varsha—has been singularly fortunate in having many such places. One of them is Panrimalai—Panri Hills—situated in the Dindigal taluk, near Madurai, the abode of Goddess Meenakshi, in Tamil Nadu. The legend associated with Panrimalai is that the Lord took the form of a sow (female pig) and wandered about suckling its offsprings. I prostrate, in all humility and reverence, before the Supreme for the great good fortune he has bestowed on me, to be born in this sacred place.

In the world of today very few indeed are those who yearn for a direct vision of God. By far the majority of the countless men and women in the world get lost in the sensuous earthly pleasures. God is the Supreme Being, plenal perfection. Transcending everything, he is yet immanent in all things. Full of grace, He graciously descends to give succour to every living creature and assumes the role of those who have dedicated themselves to selfless service. We must steadfastly strive to be worthy to receive His grace.

Ministrels of God, the great Acharyas, the Mahatmas, who are endowed with rare wisdom have all the same purpose, namely, the upliftment of their fellow men. If we are intensely devoted to God, with an yearning, guileless, pure heart, if we sing His praises with full-throated fervour, we shall then deserve His grace and we shall be moulded into good men of virtue.

Save by devotion to God, pure *Bhakti*, by no other means can one hope to cross this ocean of life. The Tamil seer Tiruvalluvar spoke to the same effect when he said in his

immortal *Kural*: "Those who seek refuge in God's Feet, only they can swim across the waters of life. The others cannot do so." Again, the seer Tirumoolar said very much the same in his *Tirumantiram*: 'Great Indeed is the loss of those who, born in this world, do not worship the Supreme Being of superlative excellence.'

It is necessary that each one of us should reform himself. A persistent awareness of *dharma*, a sense of tranquility and a zest devoid of difference will alone serve to effect this change in our character. Meditation of the Supreme, governed by a unitary consciousness, is the sure means for an enduring benefit.

Man perfects himself to the extent that he loses himself in the contemplation of God. He makes himself eligible for God's Grace and acquires the numerous powers of God himself. Streaming from His Grace, wonderous miracles can easily be wrought. The Tamil word for God signifies the Being who "Ultimately Is," when everything else has perished. If we meditate on that word, we can have a soul-sight of the God signified by it. He is the transcendent One who infills the mind which has realised the significance of the five mystic syllables (the *Panchakshara* NA-MA-SI-VA-YA) which help to concentrate on Him.

Blessed are the pure-hearted; God reveals himself to them. To get His Grace one should give Him devotion. Strength of mind begets peace of mind, which in turn gives discrimination, detachment, control of the senses, service to the needy, good company, uttering the name of the Lord and adhering to the path of Truth. Devotion is sustained by these virtues. Intense devotion dowers one with several spiritual powers. They lead a man to the realisation of his true Atman. To realise the Atman is to feel God in every part of one's being, nay, in all animate and inanimate being.

God resides in the heart of everyone. He is omnipresent and omnipotent. Not a blade of grass moves without His will. He alone is. He is one without a second. When once one is blessed with the soul-sight of God, one will realise His immanence in everything. Freed from avarice and anger, in that transparently pure condition, one can also see the innumerable *leelas* of the Lord.

Milk and water mix freely. But butter churned from milk when put in water, does not dissolve in it but floats in it. Similarly if a man has once become one with God, even if he, mixes with and lives amidst those of a lower spiritual evolution, he does not get lost in them.

He who has realised the unity of Prakriti and the Atman with Brahman will neither entangle others nor himself get entangled in the meshes of transient Good and Evil.

Even today, there live amidst us Souls who can convert a desert into a smiling, delightful garden. We must be on the look-out for them. To see material objects with our eyes we need the sun by day and other light by night. Even so, unless god-men show us the path and guide us, we cannot reach Him. We should strive our utmost with unsagging zeal to reach divine heights. For that we need the grace of God and the blessings of the Guru.

To conquer death in life and to negate birth after death, to attain the Eternal—that must be the sole objective of human endeavour, for

“God is the ultimate Truth, my dear,
And He is the Ever Auspicious,
All other gods are but phantoms, my dear”.

“All men are one family and one only is their God.”

4. THE ETERNAL BRIDEGROOM

God is the eternal Bridegroom to whom all mortals are drawn as His brides. That alone is true love which suffuses the heart of the devotee. It is love at its best, the highest and the most sublime. It is divine love; for it is love of the Divine. The word is abused in its material connotation. Bodily lust is miscalled love.

The Nayanmars were full of such divine love. It is different from mere devotion as generally understood. To them their devotion to God was more valuable than even their life. Mere intellect which scans the material world cannot comprehend it. Like the Brahman of the Upanishads, which is declared 'to be known by those who do not know and not known by those who know', mere reason cannot sound its depths. To the sophisticated, it may look like a state of hysteria. To those for whom this material work is all that is, it may appear to be a folly. To the valiant, it may seem a piece of chicken-heartedness. Those who swear by *ahimsa* will be aghast at the *himsa* practised by some of the devotees. Each one judging it may see in it the antithesis of his own point of view.

We must go to the root of the matter and try to understand the truth. Our Nayanmars are dedicated souls who offered their bodies, their very life and soul as a sacrifice at the foot-stool of God. They do not hesitate to chastise those who are the enemies of God's devotees. The body is punished to save the undwelling soul. The significance of this will not be apparent to a superficial mind.

Even today we witness the occurrence of certain miracles. Instead of making fruitless researches into their fact or possibility, one should concede that nothing is impossible in a universe governed by an omnipotent Providence.

God resides in the heart of those who receive His grace and conveys secret intimations to them. The world even now abounds in such elect souls. Such walking divinities live and move amidst us like ordinary men. These are the true *jnanis*, the true devotees and lovers of God. If we attach ourselves to them they will draw us to themselves as a magnet does the bits of iron, and, even as the iron gets magnetised in the process, we shall be divinised by them. They will bathe us in the waters of their love and purify our entire being.

But a rust-laden iron will resist the attraction by the magnet. Even so, if our minds are soiled by the rust of lust, anger and greed, we shall be impervious to this divine attraction.

He who would be wise should subject himself to certain disciplines. An undivided devotion to the *guru* and an unflinching control of the senses are necessary. These two are the sure means to attain the ultimate objective of life. That is the lesson which our great good men have taught us.

5. THE TRUTH I KNOW

The universe and its inhabitants live and exist by the grace of the Omnipresent and Omnipotent Divinity which not only vibrates the universe but is itself vibrant.

To the extent to which man's mind is attuned towards Divinity he becomes refined. To the extent to which a man's mind leans towards and merges with God, he gets the Divine Grace which enables him to overcome the cycle of births and deaths. It is only by Divine Grace that man attains the stage of perfection and gets endowed with the glorious innumerable powers of God.

Bhakti or devotion takes a man to His Grace. To cognise devotion one needs inner purity. This inner purity begets inner strength. Once this inner strength is attained, discrimination, dispassion, compassion, service to the noble, divine association, divine society, singing of God's name, truth etc. follow. With the attainment of these attributes one experiences devotional ecstasies. A spontaneous and effortless devotion is the natural result then. Such devotion leads to the attainment of all *Siddhis*. The next stage is liberation (*mukti*). In the liberated stage one attains self-realisation. This self-realisation leads to God-Realisation.

God resides in the hearts of all; only the minds of some are not with Him. When one realises the Almighty, compassion fills him internally and overflows outwards and he sees Him as the Omnipresent. The *bhakta* who is blessed with the vision of God sees Him at all places, in all things and at all times and all in Him. But then, the higher aspects of God could be seen in man too. Still better aspects are visible in those pure and good-natured *bhaktas* who do not have even a tinge of lust or desire for wealth. Those who have attained God-vision see Him in His manifold *leelas*.

Milk and water mix freely but butter taken from milk does not mix with water. It floats. Similarly the soul which has attained Realisation will not be affected by association with ill-natured and imperfect beings.

One who has attained the knowledge that Nature (*Prakriti*) and Self (*Atman*) are unified with *Brahman* (Cosmic Consciousness), will not lay himself to be bound by virtue and vice.

When Yogis mindfully bestow mercy, the doors of Yogic stages are automatically flung open without one's own effort. This is a truth worth knowing. Even if the grace of God and the Guru are available, unless a man yearns for liberation or vision of God, he cannot achieve any benefit. However much a man may strive, without God's Grace he cannot gain anything in this life. Therefore man should strive and work hard in his lifetime to attain God-head. One should seek and learn what one does not know from others who know.

Even at present there are amongst us *mahatmas* (god-men) who are capable of converting dreary deserts into lands of plenty. One should search, seek and find out such a realised *guru*. There is an old saying that it is easier to find a thousand *gurus* but difficult to get a true disciple. The real meaning of this saying is that there are many great souls who could impart powerful initiations but the number of those who could strictly follow the same and realise the truth is infinitesimally small.

To realise that eternal, basic and permanent state which is beyond birth and death and therefore deathless and birthless, should be the high, exalted and ultimate goal of human life. May one and all strive to achieve this goal by the grace of the Almighty!

6. DIVINE GRACE—MAN'S BIRTHRIGHT

To lead a good life in this world, devotion to God is very essential. All beings strive towards achieving this objective. Many a great soul has taken birth in this world from time to time and led mankind towards the path of righteousness. "Rare is the human birth in the midst of countless living creatures"—the great souls have taught us.

The difference between animals and men is that animals possess only the five senses whereas man possesses also the sixth sense. With the special quality of discrimination bestowed on us, it is our duty to tread the righteous path shown to us by the great ones, and reach the blessed feet of the Lord, there to experience everlasting bliss.

We are steeped in utter darkness which is nothing but ignorance. This ignorance may even be termed as egoism. Egoism, ignorance, vanity, pride—all these connote the same meaning. The darkness of ignorance can only be dispelled by the light of Inner Vision.

To meditate on God, devoid of egoism, becomes impossible. For, even to keep away from egoism, His grace is absolutely necessary. To illustrate: Suppose there is darkness in a place. To get rid of this darkness the light of a lamp is necessary. Isn't it? To dispel this darkness first and then install the light becomes impossible without the aid of the light first.

God's grace is necessary to drive away first the egoism in the mind. This egoism grows and gains ground in one's self in the form of pride, "I" and "mine." The seed of the thought giving rise to the ego is one's claim that "I have done all these, I am the Master of all these" etc. This type of egoism is natural to all beings. However it is only because the human being has the capacity to either develop or annihilate this egoism that

human birth is considered to be the highest creation. One who has learning, wealth, family and character considers himself great. Even he who does not possess these qualities also says he is great. This egoism has taken deep root and has assumed huge proportions in each and every human being. To destroy this deep-rooted egoism one has to realise the Divine Fraternity: "One family—One God."

There is a higher Principle above us all. One should realise his own insignificance before this higher Principle. This thought should sink deep into our minds. It is only when we concentrate on this thought again and again that our vanity starts diminishing and is ultimately extinguished altogether. *God's grace belongs to one and all.* To think that "I am alone entitled to this Grace" is ignorance. The thought of doing good to others to the best of one's ability through Divine Grace should be assiduously cultivated. If progress is achieved in this way, it would work out to the welfare of the world and nothing else. Even the feeling that one is a servant of God would be adequate enough to root out egoism.

It is worth pondering over what Saint Tiruvalluvar has said about these truths:

'He who destroys the concept of "I" and "mine" enters into a World higher than the Gods!'

'Be bound to the Detached so that your attachments may cease.'

Let us, who are born in this world, endowed with the sixth sense, devote at least five minutes a day to meditate on the Omnipresent and the All-Transcendent God and ennoble ourselves by learning from the wise what we ourselves do not know.

7. THE GURU AND THE DISCIPLE

Guru is Brahma, Guru is Vishnu, Guru is Maheswara, Guru is Para Brahma. There is no equal to Guru. One who has a Guru is blessed. The meaning of the scriptures is revealed to the one who looks upon his Guru as the Supreme Being. The word 'Guru' means 'One who dispels darkness.' Teachers of real spiritual enlightenment are very rare. They are also not easily accessible until the aspirant cultivates absolute detachment and uninterrupted loving service and sings and hears the glory of the Lord. When one has sincerely and successfully done all these things, the Guru will be accessible to him. The contact with the Guru becomes unailing in its result. The Guru can lift the devotees from the slough of despondency and hopeless attachment to the insipid things of the world and connect him directly to the Lord so that he may receive His descending Grace, that is, *Sakti Nipata*. The direct contact of a disciple with his Guru will bring about the enjoyment of permanent bliss and emancipation from the cycle of births and deaths.

There are three things which are difficult to acquire in this world; namely, human birth, intense desire to know God and refuge at the lotus feet of the Satguru. When all these three things are accomplished liberation to the disciple is assured.

The boat of the human body has been purchased at a very high price—the cumulative effect of meritorious deeds in past lives. The physical body is a suitable medium for crossing the ocean of life as it is equipped with an instrument called Buddhi or intelligence. The Buddhi is to be made use of in Yoga in its various aspects.

The disciple has to be disciplined for Yoga. He must approach the Guru with humility and faith. Obedience to the Guru is the first step which a disciple has to assiduously practise for being trained in the path of Yoga. To be in company with one's Guru is itself Yoga. Various types of Yoga are mentioned in the Gita, to be followed according to the mental aptitude of the

disciple. Each disciple has to begin from where he stands. The Karma Yoga, the Jnana Yoga and the Bhakti Yoga are indicated to the devotees who have aptitude for work, knowledge and devotion respectively. The Soul is potentially divine in nature and the goal is to manifest this divinity within by controlling forces of nature both internally and externally by work or worship, philosophy or psychic control and thus become free.

Why should such importance be attached to the Guru? Because, the higher knowledge which comes from *chit* does not come in the form of ideas or thoughts, but as power or *Sakti*. This power or *Sakti* has to be transmitted directly by the Guru to the disciple — either by touch, look or mere thought. Unless transmission of *chaitanya* takes place, there can be no progress. The Guru must himself possess the power to transmute this *Sakti* to the disciple.

The distinction between a devotee and a disciple has to be understood. The devotee's approach to the Guru is like "*Markata Kisora Nyaya*." The young one of the monkey clings to its mother with its own strength, with the result that there is the risk of a fall. The disciple's approach to the Guru is like '*Marjala Kisora Nyaya*.' The young kitten is lifted by the mother cat when in distress, and relies upon the strength of the mother for its protection. The disciple having surrendered himself completely to the Guru there is no risk of such fall. The Guru takes care of the disciple.

There are three stages of evolution. In the beginning the disciple says "I belong to the Guru." This is achieved by the path of selfless service to the Guru.

The disciple next says "Guru belongs to me." This is achieved by the path of devotion to the Guru.

Finally, the disciple says "I am Guru." This is achieved by the path of Jnana or knowledge with the very grace of the Guru.

8. THE ONE REALITY

There is one Reality in this world which is described in different ways. The scriptures also tell us *Esa Devo Visvakarma Mahatma*—that one Supreme Lord dwells in the hearts of all living beings. He is present in everyone of us. There is a difference between the presence of God and consciousness of His being present in us. We are religious only when we are able to have that consciousness of God.

By following the various methods indicated in the scriptures one may attain salvation some time in due course. But a Sadguru or a saint purifies you at sight. They are not people who infer God by philosophical arguments but they are people who have seen the Divine. The Sadgurus have felt the reality in their own beings. They live in the consciousness of the presence of God.

The great saints are the messengers sent by the Supreme for the purpose of satisfying the aspirations of the human individual. Every saint embodies a little of the light of the Supreme and when that light spreads over his whole nature and makes of it an eternal flame, a transparent spirit, then the saint becomes a God-man on earth.

Our faith is shallow on account of our pride. It is said in the *Ramayana* that a crow named Bhushandi did not at first accept Rama as an incarnation of God. Once it incurred Rama's displeasure. It flew through the different worlds to escape Rama's wrath. But it could not. Then it surrendered itself to Him and took refuge at His feet. Rama took the crow in his hand and swallowed it. Thereafter, the crow found that it was seated in its own nest, in a tree. After the pride had been crushed the bird came to realise that though Rama looked like any other man, yet He contained in his stomach the entire Universe. It is very difficult to understand that God can be a

finite human being and at the same time the all-pervading Soul of the Universe.

God is the best object of study. He who seeks God intellectually is certainly better than the one who is completely ignorant of His existence. Feeling of God is better than intellectual study and experiencing God is the highest goal of life. Still it is better to become God than to experience Him.

The God-realised person knows himself to be God as an ordinary man knows himself to be a man. All that is noble, beautiful and lovable, all that is great and good and inspiring in this Universe is just an infinitesimal fraction of the unfading and unspeakable glory of God-realisation. The limited individual must disappear entirely if there is to be an admission into the state of Godhood. We must have faith in the God-man and surrender to him.

If a devotee or a disciple accepts without reserve from the bounty which the God-man shows, he creates a link which stands by him and he attains salvation. Further if the person serves the Sadguru offering all his life and possessions in his service, he creates a link which will reinforce his spiritual progress by inviting upon himself the grace and help of the Sadguru.

To be born a human being is fortunate enough. The man's body is precious. It has the highest evolutionary value because of the unique brain and the spinal centres. It is indeed a calamity not to care for one's own good and not to strive for the attainment of God here and now.

The *Vasanta* Season is the cause of fragrant flowers and sweet fruits. But the *Vasanta Kala* or season does not enjoy the fruits; man enjoys them. So too are the Sadgurus. They shine forth as the treasure-house of wisdom, right knowledge

and good nature. They spend their lives in doing good to others. They have transcended the mortal life which is full of woes. They help their devotees to cross the ocean of *samsar* without expecting anything in return for the help they render. The blessings of the Guru and the sages are the best means to attain self-realisation.

Therefore, one should trust in the words of holy men and great souls who have realised God. Two things are required for victory. They are, the contemplative wisdom of the Guru and the practical Sadhana of the devotees. The *Mahabharata* war was won by the combination of the *Yoga* of Sri Krishna with *Dhanur* of Arjuna, his disciple. Therefore, Krishna is called *Yogeswara* and Arjuna the *Dhanurdhara*. Both are one. The *Nara-Narayana* are to be found in each one of us. There is the battle going on in us in the battle-field of *Samsar*. May we all be victorious by the Blessings of *Yogeswara*!

9. JEEVAN MUKTI

State of Jeevan Mukti: Some people live in the world even after attaining jnana. They see both what is inside and what is outside the room. The light of God illumines the world. Therefore, with that light, they can discriminate between good and bad, permanent and impermanent. The ignorant who lead a worldly life without knowing God are like people living in a house with mud walls. With the help of a dim light they can see the inside of the house, but nothing more. Those that live in the world after attaining knowledge and realisation of God are like people living in glass houses. They see inside of the room and also all that is outside. The light from the sun of knowledge enters strongly into the room. They perceive everything inside the room very clearly. They know what is good and what is bad; God alone is the doer and we are all his instruments. Therefore it is impossible for a jnani to be egoistic.

The work of Jeevan Mukta: Just as a lion rushes out of the cage, the Jeevanmukta breaks through the fetters of attachment and rushes out of the prison house of the world. The Jeevanmukta by his life and action demonstrates the reality of Brahman and illusoriness of names and forms. Having himself crossed the ocean of births and deaths, he helps others to the shore of immortality. Though he possesses the body, he does not identify himself with the body and is therefore free from desires, works and fears. He is aware of the spirit and is convinced that the "Gunas" engage his body in various works. He feels through all heads, walks with all feet, eats through all mouths and thinks through all minds. Physical death and birth have no meaning for him; a change of body to him is like a change of garment or a change of residence. A Jeevanmukta transcends the scriptures and social conventions and yet never takes a false step. As a piece of wood is borne by a current to

high or low ground, so is the body of a Jeevanmukta carried by the momentum of past actions to the varied experiences of their fruits as they present themselves in due course. He is not concerned with bondage or liberation, for the spirit is ever free. The bondage and liberation are the character of the mind which is falsely superimposed on the spirit. It is therefore said: "He who sees nothing in the waking state even as in deep sleep, who though beholding duality does not in reality behold it, since he beholds only the Absolute, who though engaged in work is really inactive, he and no other is the knower of Self. This is the truth." The Upanishads declare that the Jeevanmukta comes out of the body purer and brighter like a snake from its slough. His soul does not reincarnate again but is absorbed in the spirit, leaving behind no trace of separate existence. As milk is poured into water, as oil is poured into oil, so the Jeevanmukta is absorbed in Brahman, in glory, peace, knowledge and reality.

Jeevanmukti and Videhamukti: It is the nature of man's mind to enslave him through its tendency to cause suffering owing to the pleasures and pains. This is due to the belief that he is the author of his actions and the harvester of their results. Jeevanmukti or liberation, while still in the body, is the cessation of mental qualities. This is followed by Videhamukti or liberation without the body on the exhaustion of "Prarabdha Karma." This is like space inside a jar becoming one with the space outside it, when the jar breaks.

The human goal is the attainment of the everlasting bliss through the elimination of the thought that one is the author of one's actions. This, the Guru says, can be achieved by human effort. Right understanding alone helps liberation like wealth which is earned by commerce. Right understanding is dependent on human effort. It is to be achieved by the abolition of all vasanas or tendencies, by serving the Guru.

"The rise of mind is the man's fall and the fall of the mind is the man's rise. The fall of the mind brings the state of complete peace and benevolence. That is the state of Jeevanmukti, which is free from all possibility of rebirth. 'Sarupa' is the mindlessness of Jeevanmukta. The 'Arupa' kind arises after the body falls away."

The mind is the root of the world tree with its thousands of buds, branches, fruits and leaves. Intentions (Sankalpas) constitute the mind and the mind constitutes the intentions and is the root of the world tree.

It is therefore necessary to wither the mind quickly in order that the world tree may also wither away.

The mind is to be stilled by performing activities without attachment, by not ascribing reality to the worldly affairs and by appreciating the perishability of the body. This prevents vasanas from arising and prevention of vasanas annuls the mind. It is better to turn one's energy to search for the light within. It is the vasanas that provoke the movements of the life breath and these in turn provoke the vasanas. Thus the seed in the mind is produced and again produces, as in plant. The mind has two seeds, breathing and vasanas. When one of them ceases, the other also does. Just as the eye falls without attachment on things that come involuntarily within its range, so does a valiant person behold things and do actions.

10. UPADESA

Every individual is bound by his Karma in the Universe of names and forms. By his deeds in his past lives, he is sometimes happy and sometimes unhappy.

We are slaves to our senses, slaves of our wives and children, slaves of praise and slaves of this and slaves of that. This wretched slavery will never end. The disease of illusion has caught hold of the Jiva from time without beginning. The disease of Moha (illusion) can only be destroyed (Kshaya) by the application of the dust of the two lotus feet of the Sat-Guru and by accepting the Upadesa given by the Sat-Guru. Even the Doctor needs the confidence and the faith of the patients before he can cure them and restore them to health. The disease of diseases is the I-ness in us, and will not the Doctor of Doctors, the Sat-Guru, expect from us our faith and confidence in His Upadesa, if we expect Him to cure us and lead us to Moksha?

The God-realised person knows himself to be God as an ordinary man knows himself to be a man. His spiritual certainty based upon continuous self-knowledge is incapable of being challenged by any one or by anything. The Sat-Guru is the one who has passed through the network of the creator and creation, in knowing Himself as the Almighty. He is in a perfect wakeful state. All that is noble, beautiful and lovely, all that is great and good and inspiring in the universe, is just a small fraction of the unfading and unspeakable glory of the God-man. The Sat-Gurus take active interest in the souls which are in bondage and they use their own bodies consciously for working in the creation in order to help their disciples in their Godward march.

If a disciple accepts without reserve from the bounty which the God-man shows, he creates a link which will stand by him

and he attains salvation. Further, if an individual serves such a Sat-Guru, offering his life and possessions in His service, he creates a link which will reinforce his spiritual progress by inviting upon himself the grace and help of the Guru. Upadesa is a special word which has no exact English translation. It means guidance or instruction which a God-man gives to his disciple. The instruction depends upon the temperament and spiritual maturity of the individual. There can be no mass instruction. The Sat-Guru initiates and instructs the disciple into the path which He Himself has realised. God, Guru and Self are the same. To be a Guru is to give initiation and Upadesa. Diksha means initiation and Upadesa means instruction and the two are inseparable. There can be no Upadesa without the initial act of initiation and no point in initiation unless it is to be followed up with Upadesa. There are three kinds of initiation i.e. by touch, by look and by thought. The three modes of initiation are well-known, being typified by the bird which has to sit on the eggs in order to hatch them; by fish which needs only to look at them and the tortoise which needs only to think of them.

He that has won the Grace of the Guru shall undoubtedly be saved and never forsaken, just as the prey that has fallen into the tiger's jaws will never be allowed to escape. Association with saints and God-men works a subtle alchemy even though its effects might only become visible years later. In this spiritually dark age, when many seek, but a Guru is rare to find, Bhagavan Himself takes a human body on earth as the Sat-Guru, the Divine guide of all who turn to Him.

II. PANCHAKSHARI VIDYA

The previous article on Upadesa contains a brief description of the work of Sat Guru with reference to the modes of initiation and instruction to the disciple. The Upadesa containing the whole Mantra and the Instruction of Guru to meditate on the meaning of the Mantra forms a Vidya usually named after the Mantra.

The Panchakshari Vidya consisting of a garland of five letters strung on the endless string of OM is one of the most powerful Mantras for self-realisation. The Mantra

“OM NA-MA-SI-VA-YA
OM SI-VA-YA-NA-MA
OM SIVA-YA-SIVA
OM SIVA-SIVA.”

is full of mystic experience and is therefore a symbolic entity containing great wisdom and spiritual truth. The truth is broadly indicated but the technique to achieve and arrive at it, is always left to be taught by the tradition of Guru and disciple. The Panchakshari Vidya is therefore a secret technique of meditation on the five great elements, namely Earth-Water-Fire-Air-Ether and is represented by the five letters making up the Panchakshara. The five elements which are found in the Universe are also found in the body of the disciple. NA stands for the two feet, MA stands for the stomach, SI stands for the two shoulders, VA stands for the mouth and YA stands for the two eyes. The disciple in meditation has to identify the letters with the five limbs of the body thus realising himself as the embodiment of the Mantra.

The letters of the second line of the Mantra SI-VA-YA-NA-MA respectively stand for the five centres of the senses of smell, taste, form, sound and touch. The disciple has to practise equanimity at all times when sense organs come in contact with the sense objects during meditation.

The mind, intellect and the Ego together with the five elements constitute what is termed as "Eightfold Prakriti" that has come to be superimposed on the Truth through ignorance. The subtle body of the disciple is made up of the Mind, Intellect and Ego corresponding to the third line of the Mantra "SIVA-YA-SIVA" and its vehicles of expression are the five sense organs. The five sense objects consisting of smell, taste, form, sound and touch push their impulses within through the gateways of sense organs and their impulses get focussed on the mind. The impulses received in the mind are rationally classified into knowledge by the intellect. In all the states of perception, attention and intellection, the disciple has a continuous sense of "I-ness", which is called the Ego.

The spiritual factor OM is the pure consciousness with whose contact the mind (Antahkarana) of the disciple functions and without it the disciple becomes dull and insentient. This principle is the higher nature of the disciple and is indicated in the fourth line of the Mantra "OM-SIVA-SIVA". The higher nature or Sivatatva is unfolded in the bosom of the disciple by the Panchakshari Vidya.

The essential condition for the Panchakshari Vidya is that the disciple should possess unwavering devotion and faith in Guru. In modern times, we are asked to think before we leap, but the traditional relation between the Guru and disciple admits no such preference. Here the Guru is the sole director and the supreme arbitrator. But, one need not be discouraged by one's inability to repose the faith in the Guru. The mystical experiences in the Vidya will make the disciple reassured and the faith in the Guru is not shaken as one proceeds in the Vidya.

The fruit of the Vidya is Self-knowledge, by knowing which everything else is known. Blessed indeed are those who have supreme faith in the Guru for their's is the kingdom of Sat-Chit-Ananda, the abode of Siva.

12. THE EFFICACY OF SRI RAMA NAMA

The power of Rama Nama is immense and indescribable. Its sweetness is unparalleled. Once a person gets to taste the elixir of Rama Nama, he will not let go of it. He becomes attuned to heavenly life. The grace of the Almighty is absolutely necessary for one to even utter it with faith and devotion. Valmiki, the author of the *Ramayana*, is an example to the point. He led a highly evil life before he became the sage *par excellence*. Though born in a high caste, he married a low caste woman and took to hunting and robbing to maintain his family. He was steeped in heinous crime.

The time came for his redemption. The grace of the Lord fell on him. It took the combined spiritual strength of the holy Saptharishis to free him from his sinful life of rampage and robbery. They came headed by Narada. They were attacked by Valmiki, who demanded that they should give over their everything to him. Narada asked him for whom he was committing such atrocious crimes. The man said that he was doing so for the sake of his wife and children. Then the rishi asked him whether his wife and children would bear any share of the sins committed by him for their sake. Valmiki said that he was sure that they would do so.

Narada directed him to find out whether it was so. Imagine the horror that struck Valmiki when he found out that they refused to subscribe to the dictum that they should bear their share of the sins done by him. He was shocked beyond description. He raced back to the Saptharishis, freed them from the bonds with which he had tied them securely and fell at their feet. He prayed for their mercy and for the way out from the boiling cauldron of evil into which he had fallen. Narada then tried to make him utter the divine name Rama. Valmiki tried to do so. But no! all his efforts in that direction were in vain.

The two potent letters would not combine in the proper way. Then the great teacher that he was, the Sage Narada tried a unique method. He asked Valmiki to say 'MA' first and then 'RA'. In this manner, he was directed to say 'Ma' and 'Ra' one after another and then in quick succession. Ultimately he could utter the divine name perfectly. The Saphtharishis then went their way.

The urge to cut himself away from the miserable bonds of Samsara gave a keen edge to his devotion and Valmiki went on repeating Rama Nama at a place. He was oblivious of what happened around him. He knew not about the outside world. An ant-hill grew over him. His meditation ultimately made him divine, so divine that he later became the renowned author of *Ramayana*, the sacred story of the incarnation of Rama.

Ramanama is *Hariharaathmaka*. It destroys the sins of a person and will not allow him to think of sinning. The person who utters it cannot swerve from the path of virtue. It is called the *Taraka Mantra*. It pilots one safely over the ocean of Samsara leading him on to self-realisation. That it is *Hariharaathmaka* is the divine truth. The great singer-saint, Sri Thyagaraja, sings: "Oh Blessed king of men! How to divine who you are? How to do worship to you? Are you Siva, Vishnu, Brahma or Parabrahma? 'MA' is the vital life-giving seed-letter to Siva Mantra. 'RA' is the vital force of the Vishnu Mantra. I make my salutations to those eminent people that have this true knowledge."

Without the letter 'MA', 'Namasivaaya' becomes 'Nasivaa-ya' which denies 'Siva'. Without the letter 'RA' 'Namo Naraayanaaya' becomes 'Namo Nayanaaya' denying any place for the existence of the Lord Narayana. The combination of these two letters i.e. Rama, destroys evil like Rudra and protects like Vishnu. The very same truth is posited when the Tamilian says: *Hariyum Sivanum onnethan, Ariyaadavan vayil manne thaan*

—‘Hari and Hara are one and the same divinity. One who does not comprehend this is as one whose ‘mouth is filled with dust.’ He has no prospects. The Upanishad *Vaakya: Ekam Sath; Vipra Bahudha Vadanthi* postulated the identical fact. God is one but the sages call Him by different names.

Rama mantra is *Sathrucchedaika mantram*. It is the unique mantra that has the power to annihilate all enemies—not merely external enemies but the internal ones too, namely, the Arishadvargas of *Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada* and *Maat-sarya*. The lives of the saints like Kabir, Tulsidas, Thyagaraja and others illustrate how the evil-doers planning to make trouble and mischief for them are dealt with by Lord Rama.

Once, certain evil-doers wanted to embarrass Kabir and put him to shame by issuing invitations under his name to Bhagavathas of various places to come over and partake of his hospitality. Accordingly, many Sadhus came there. Kabir was in ecstasy seeing Rama among them. He danced away in delight. The Lord came to his help. He appeared as so many Kabirs to each of the devotees, satisfied them and disappeared without anyone being the wiser about it. The evil men who engineered the situation were converted as a result and, being awed by Kabir’s divine power, surrendered unto him and became his disciples.

Again, at one time, two thieves desired to enter the math of Tulsidas in the night and take away the golden vessels that were in use there. As they neared the gates, they found two divine heroes, bright and lustrous, guarding the precincts and menacing them. They tried to turn about and get away but could not. They were in that unenviable position all through the night. When the day broke, Tulsidas came out. They prostrated before him on the ground in supplication. They recounted to the saint as to what had happened. The saint congratulated them on their *Punya*. They were indeed blessed,

for the two armed heroes were none other than Sri Rama and his devoted brother, Lakshmana. The very sight of these divinities had burnt away their sins. Thereupon, the thieves became reformed and attended on Tulsidas.

The divine name of Rama Nama when uttered with supreme devotion gives life even to a dead person, even to an inanimate body. Sri Thyagaraja, while on his return from Tirupati after a pilgrimage in search of his pooja idols, came to a place called *Madhyaarjunam*. There, in the darkness, a couple were going and the husband fell into a well and died. The wife was weeping bitterly. Thyagaraja's heart melt. He sang the song "Sri Rama Padama! Na chittaniki Rave!" in the Raga "Amrithavahini". At once, the dead man woke up as if from sleep and with the permission of the saint went to Tirupati with his wife.

These are not fables but actual facts. The power of God can be demonstrated. It is demonstrated in the lives of all saints that have gone before. It is being even now demonstrated by God-men. The only thing is that people refuse to see. Even if they see, they are unaffected. What wonder can there be other than this!

13. LORD SRI KRISHNA

The Avatar of Sri Krishna is a Sampoor-naavatar. He had declared His divinity off and on and was recognised as such by the discerning. He was not like Sri Rama, who had to be reminded of his divinity. He said, *Atmanam Manusham Manye!*—I have regarded myself as an ordinary mortal—when he was asked by Brahma and others why He kept quiet as Mother Seetha entered the flames for Her fiery ordeal to prove Her chastity, and it required Brahma, the Creator to remind Him as to who He was. Not so with Lord Sri Krishna. He said:

*Parithraanaaya sadhoonam, vinaasaayacha dushkruthaam,
Dharma samsthaapanaarthaaya, sambhavaami yuge yuge!*

—For the protection of the Innocent and for the destruction of the Vicious as also for the establishment of Dharma, I take birth in every yuga.

Lord Krishna did not hide the fact of His being an incarnation of Lord Vishnu at any time. Ever since His birth, He had given proofs of His being the Lord of the Universe, the *Sath* that is called by many by devious names.

When He was born in the prison cell, where His father Vasudeva and His mother Devaki were confined by the cruel Kamsa, He appeared to them as the brilliant Vishnu with all His ensigns. He told Devaki, "In Swaayambhuva Manvantara, this Vasudeva, your husband, was a Prajapati called Suthapa. You were of the name Prisni. You were both directed by the Creator Brahma to begin procreation. Being averse to sensuality and the material pleasures, you did penance to me for twelve divine years with unswerving devotion and concentration. When I appeared before you, in your desire for progeny, you requested for the grant of a son three times. You wanted my equal as a son. So I took birth then as Prisnigarbha. I had to take

two more births with you as my parents. In the second janma, you were Aditi and Vasudeva was Kasyapa. I was born as Vamana. This is your third birth and I am fulfilling your boons. There will be no more birth for you. I have told you these things so that you can remember your previous births and be guided in your future actions. It is to facilitating your identification of me that I have appeared before you in the form initially seen by you. This Avatar not only fulfils your desires but also carries out Deva karya (the work of the Devas). So Vasudeva! you have to take me to Gokula, place me by the side of Yasoda, who is just delivering a girl who is my Yogamaya and get that baby here. The doors of this prison will not hinder you. They will open of their own accord. The Jamuna will give you way. Do not be afraid." On seeing the blissful vision of the Lord, both Devaki and Vasudeva were transported to heavenly bliss and they prayed to Him after which he assumed the form of an ordinary baby.

Again, He showed His being the Lord of the Universe to Yasoda, His foster-mother, when she upbraided Him for having eaten the dust from the earth. He showed her the worlds within Him. In that momentary glimpse, she perceived the supernatural and became dazed. She questioned herself as to whether she was awake or dreaming, whether she was really Yasoda or some other body or it was a Vaishnavite illusion. The Lord withdrew His vision and brought her back to the normal plane. She thought He was an unusual phenomenon and forgetting the vision went on as usual. The Lord's intention was that she should enjoy the Vaatsalya bhava to the full, as in her previous birth as Dhara, the wife of Drona, one of the Ashta Vasus, she had a boon from Brahma that they should regard Bhagavan with full Vaatsalya Bhava.

The Krishnaavatara was a Mahimaaavatara. The Lord performed many miracles. They had become absolutely necessary

at the juncture to provide confidence in Virtue and abhorrence of Vice. It was the time when Kamsa, full of Asuric nature, dethroned his father and occupied the throne of Madhura. He ruled with an iron hand encouraging Vice aided by Jarasandha, his father-in-law, who was very vile and powerful. There was Kalayavana, the Mleccha king, who was vice personified. There was Narakasura. There were still others like Sisupala of Chedi, Salva, Dantravakra, Vidhuradha and the other chieftains of evil fame harassing the people. The people were in mortal fear of them. To dispel this, the Lord had to come in full Amsa.

He performed many miracles. He drank away the life of Pootana, the giantess, killed Sakatasura, ended Trinaavarta and gave back human shape to Nalakoobara and Manigreeva who were trees. He made short work of Vatsaasura, Bakaasura and Aghasura. His miraculous acts made Kamsa afraid. Still he would not give up his attempts to put out Krishna, being under an illusion. It was not surprising. For, even Brahma, the Creator, was deluded into testing the divinity of the Lord. He hid all the cows and cowherd boys thinking that Krishna would be discomfited. The Lord simply smiled at his folly. He himself took the shape of all the cattle and the cowherd boys without making anyone the wiser about it. This went on for a year. Brahma came down to see how his deed affected Krishna. He was confounded when he found the cows and the cowherd boys in the Brindaavan in the usual place and also in the place where he had hidden them. He could not divine which were the true cows and who were the real cowherds among them. As he stood perplexed and stunned, he found Lord Krishna in His true shape in the pseudo cows and cowherds. Before every Krishna, there was a Brahma and other divinities offering their obeisance, attended upon by all divine powers—the siddhis like Anima, the Mahat etc., the person of the Time spirit and so on. On seeing this ecstatic vision, Brahma lost his senses. He stood transfixed like a statue. All his knowledge of the Vedas was

blotted out. All his powers appeared non-existent. His eyes became blurred. His faculties failed to function. Then Lord Krishna, out of infinite compassion, withdrew the vision and appeared before him. Brahma got back his powers, regained his spirits and prayed to Him for His mercy praising His *Vibhuti*. He said, "O Lord! I thought my power was supreme. I prided myself upon it. I am taught my position. Kindly forgive me in the largeness of Your heart and bless me." The Lord did so.

That Krishna was Narayana incarnate was also known to Nanda Gopa, His foster-father. The Gopas were overawed by the deeds of Krishna, who had conquered the poisonous Kaleeya, drunk the all-consuming forest fire, held the Govardhan Hill on His little finger to protect them from torrential rains and bewitched them by His beauty and manners. They were bewildered as to whether He was human or whether He was a mesmerist and magician. Nanda Gopa told them: "It is natural for you to have such a feeling. I will reveal to you what the sage Garga had told me when he came to name the child. He said that Krishna was born in every yuga assuming distinctive colour appropriate to the yuga. He was Narayana. He is Bhagavan born to protect Gokula and the world." The gopas became extremely satisfied and went their way.

Krishna showed His powers only when required. Even though He did so, people like Duryodhana, nay, Arjuna, fell into *Sammoha* and regarded Him lightly. Duryodhana went to the extent of even attempting to imprison Him when He came as ambassador to his court on behalf of the Pandavas. Then He showed His *Vishwaroopa* and even granted the wish of Dritharashtra, the father of Duryodhana, giving the necessary sight to witness it. Dritharashtra wished to be blind again as he did not wish to see the mundane things with those eyes spoiling that blissful scene.

Arjuna, who was always by the side of the Lord Himself,

failed to perceive His divinity and fell into mental stupor in the battle field. Then the Lord vouchsafed to him the darsan of His Cosmic Form after bestowing upon him, in infinite mercy towards him, the occult eye. Arjuna got rid of his weakness. He fell into great fear and awe. He prayed to the Lord saying: "You are the Creator of the whole Universe and all the divinities. You are the one responsible for everything existent and there is nothing outside of you. I pay my full obeisance to you. Shower Your grace, O Lord! upon me. O Eswara! I had called you Hai Krishna! Hai Yadava! Hai Sakha! and had even poked fun at you. All this had been done in my ignorance. Please forgive me as a parent forgives his child, as a friend his friend and as a lover his beloved. I have seen Your Viswaroopa, never witnessed by others before. I am overcome by terror. Please appear to me in benign form. I cannot bear this magnificent sight any longer." The Lord was pleased with him and said, "Being pleased with you, I have shown you by My yogic power my effulgent shape without beginning and without end, which had never been seen by any one. This is a unique vision for you and none else had been able to see it before. Do not be afraid. I am assuming My usual shape."

The Viswaroopa darsana shown to Arjuna was by far superior to that given unto Duryodhana and Yasoda. Yasoda was too much attracted by filial affection and dotage, regarding Him as an ordinary child. To dispel it, He had shown His Cosmic Form in a short glimpse, and then covered her with Maaya. Duryodhana was steeped in Ego and became very proud and headstrong. To curb it, Krishna gave him a glimpse of what He was. But in the case of Arjuna, it was different. Arjuna became perplexed. He did not know his dharma. He was undecided as to what to do. It became the bounden duty of the Lord to put him in the right path by wiping out his ignorance and his egotistic feelings. He prepared Partha first by telling him about the different yogas, about His *vibhuti*, gave him the

occult eye to perceive the Cosmic Form to the full, asked him to see it carefully, convinced him, and then on his request withdrew the vision. While the revelation of His divine form to Yasoda and Duryodhana was accidental and on the spur of the moment, the revelation to Arjuna was intentional and made with the firm purpose of convincing him about his duty and finally doing as bidden by the Lord. Besides these, the Lord was known in His true form to Bhishma, who made Yudhishtira worship Him at the Rajasuya sacrifice.

It is evident, therefore, that Lord Krishna was recognised as an incarnation of Parabrahma during His life time and those that opposed Him were suitably dealt with. Narakasura was killed by Him. Kalayavana was turned to ashes through the yogic fire of Muchikunda, who was made the instrument for that purpose by the Lord. Jarasandha was killed by Bhima of the Pandavas. The Kauravas were put an end to with their circle of vile rulers and chieftains through the agency of Arjuna, to whom the Lord told: *Nimitthamaathram Bhava Savyasaachin!*—You are only a tool. These are already killed by the Time spirit. Follow the Kshaatra dharma and do your duty.

By using Arjuna as a medium for the edification of the world, the Lord gave out the *Bhagavadgeetha*, the song celestial which describes His Majesty and gives out the philosophy and way of life in all its perspective, with the recipes for getting over this ocean of Samsara. The Lord said, "Be of My mind; be My devotee; worship Me; salute Me; concentrate on Me." He also said:

*Ananyaaschintayantomaam ye janah paryupaasathe,
teshaam nityaabhiyuktaanaam yogakshemam vahaamyaham.*

—I will look after all those who worship Me and think of Me with undivided attention.

What more do you want? Let us pray to Lord Krishna who said, "I will appear to all in the way and shape they think of Me."

14. KRIYA YOGA

There are two factors for gaining Self Knowledge. The first one is the *Sadhanaavastha*, as described by Sri Krishna, the Divine Teacher, to his disciple, Arjuna, in the *Gita* of the *Mahabharata* written by Vyasa. The second aspect is the *Siddhaavastha*, as described by Vasista to the divine prince, Sri Rama, in *Yoga Vaasishta* of the *Maharamayana* compiled by Valmiki.

The *Mahabharata* and the *Maharamayana* are the two great epics because they contain the theory and practice of the Vidya for achieving Self Knowledge. Both the epics are significant in the sense that a Guru is inevitable for the disciple, to realise the truth. Both Nara (Man) and Narayana (God) have become the Guru and disciple in turns, which indicates the unique relationship between the Guru and the disciple.

The *Sadhana* of living an active life of achievement, as described in the *Gita* and simultaneously living a passive life of renunciation and retirement, as described in *Yoga Vaasishta* is called *Kriya Yoga*. "Kri" means work and "Ya" means no work. In other words, the Yoga of seeing work in no work, and no work in work, is called *Kriya Yoga*.

The true meaning of work becomes difficult to understand unless we distinguish it from no work and miswork. By work, we mean a life full of duties consistent with one's status in society and of active achievement. A man is said to do no work when he leads a life of renunciation and retirement. The word miswork represents that kind of work which is wrongly chosen and performed. Miswork has to be avoided at all costs, as it does not contribute to the evolution of the soul. Therefore, to prevent work from becoming miswork, one has to firstly choose his duties appropriately and secondly do those duties with ability and cleverness. In other words, work means

that kind of activity which is rightly chosen and well carried out. Work carried out in this way binds the man to the *Samsara*, but to attain freedom from the bondage, we have to learn to distinguish work from no work also. No work does not mean absence of work or the very opposite of work. The *Yoga Vaasishta* describes that under certain given conditions, it is possible to experience work as equivalent to no work and no work equivalent to work. Thus, work and no work are compatible with each other. That truly ethical work which possesses the characteristic of no work and that no work which possesses the characteristic of work, is called *Kriya*, which leads to self-realisation and God attainment.

Hence arises the need for the practice of *Kriya Yoga* by combining work and no work in daily life. Indeed, it looks like a riddle when a householder is called upon to see work in no work and no work in work and it naturally requires intelligence to solve the riddle. A *Kriya Yogi* is one who possesses intelligence and is therefore an appropriate doer of all "Work". It is only such a person that can live a life of duty aright. In *Kriya Yoga*, we find a harmony of work and wisdom, of achievement and renunciation. Work can be converted into no work by abandoning all selfish motives with respect to that work. But the resultant no work is not passive and inert because it has really active work performed under certain conditions for its equivalent. That condition is the worker's freedom from selfish motives and deserves fruits of those actions and therefore the person is perfectly satisfied. The contentment and freedom do not interfere in his work and achievement. In fact, work will not cling to such a *Yogi* but help him as a means of liberating the soul from bondage of work leading to salvation.

Kriya Yoga exhorts the man to be a great actor, to be a great renouncer and be a great enjoyer. All said and done, the mind of the disciple has to dwell on the lotus feet of the Guru

and has to abide in the spoken word of the Guru for earning the wisdom, to live a life of duty aright. Otherwise, Kriya will bind the aspirant to delusion (Moha) again, instead of freeing him from Karma and *Moha + Kshaya* (Moksha) will not be experienced by the disciple.





Sri - La - Sri Panrimalai Swamigal:
The Sadguru

நொச்சூர் சுவாமிஜி
ஸ்ரீ சிவயோகி ஸித்தானந்தா



முகுகு!

வட சென்னிமலை அடிவாரம்
வட சென்னிமலை P. O.
ஆத்தூர் Tk., சேலம் Dt.
20/12/71
மேபே.

சீர்கொண்ட சிவநான வுனிமலரும் ஆனந்த
தெய்விகத் திருவதனமும்

தேனமுதமான உப தேசமும் கருணையே
தேக்கிய மலர்க் கண்களும்

கார்கொண்ட மேனியும் தேவரும் காணரிய
கன கொடி சித்திகள் செய்யும்

தற்பக கரங்களும் சங்க சக்கிர நேக
கதிர்விடும் கமல பதமும்

போர்கொண்ட எமது மன மாயையினுள் நீக்கிடும்
பூரண சொடேபமாகப்

புகல் நமசிவய நாம புண்ணிய முழக்கமொடு
பூசித்து வாழ்த்துகின் றோம்

பார்கொண்ட மெய்யடியர் யாவர்க்கும் எளிதில்
பரிந்துவரும் குருநாதனே!

பண் கமழம் கிள்குமிழ் விடும்பு குகன் அன்பியுயர்
பன்னிமலை வந்த பரனே

ஜம்

OM MURUGA

This is an invocation in Tamil Verse to Sri-La-Sri Panrimalai Swamigal by Nochchur Swamiji Sri Siva Yogi Siddhananda of Vada Chennimalai, Tamil Nadu (South India).

Sri Siddhanandaji describes Sri-La-Sri Panrimalai Swamigal as possessing a blissful effulgent divine countenance, giving nectarine upadesas, eyes full of compassion, dark complexion, hands like the 'Kalpa' performing Siddhis galore which are the envy of the Gods and lotus feet delineating the divine attributes of conch and chakra—the Great Preceptor enshrined in full form in the hearts of his disciples and devotees who ceaselessly chant the Pranava Panchakshara OM NAMASIVAYA in full-throated praise of the Lord — the remover of the darkness of their ignorance and the bestower of his blessings on them—verily the beloved of Lord Guha (Lord Subrahmanya)!

15. THE GURU

There is nothing in the world to compare the Guru. The nearest similitude to the Guru may be said to be the touchstone which converts into gold all pieces of iron coming in contact with it. Even the touchstone cannot convert the iron into touchstone and does not impart its own power to the iron piece, the power of the touchstone. The Guru however makes the disciple who has surrendered himself to Him his equal in all respects and sees that the disciple in his turn gets the capacity to impart to his own disciples the state of illumination he got from his Guru.

The Guru and Disciple

The oriental concept of "The Guru" and the relationship he bears to his chosen disciple are very interesting for observation and analysis. It is not the relationship that exists between the teacher and the taught as in western countries. According to the occidental ideas the master serves as a medium for imparting knowledge of truth which is the final goal. But in India, Truth and Guru are completely identified. There is no truth apart from the Guru, and to know and serve the Guru with whole-hearted devotion is also to serve the cause of truth.

Guru and God

The Vedas and the Puranas say that the Teacher is greater than the Lord; the works of the world are incomplete without the Teacher and the Lord shall never be known and never be met without first meeting the Teacher. The sages are aware that salvation lies in the house of the Lord and that the Lord resides in the house of the Guru. He who regards God as superior to the Guru is a fool. The Guru is immortal. Godhood is evanescent. Before the greatness of the Guru, the greatness of the Lord is as nothing. He must be a bad disciple who

regards his Guru and God as of equal count. The power of God is the power of illusion; the power of the Guru carries everything before it.

Guru Bhakthi

The Guru has become the accepted axiom of spiritual progress and as such the relationship he bears to those whom he guides is unique. The road to heaven cannot be seen until the guru's grace paves the way for others to follow. A firm and unfaltering faith in the Guru is the highest *sadhana*. Human relationship is always based on the instinct of possession or appropriation. But the disciple's attitude should be one of voluntarily giving of himself unspoiled by any demands and untrammelled by any spirit of barter. In return the Guru's grace is just as spontaneous and unstinted, in that the Guru takes up the entire burden of the disciple to prepare him in the way He thinks best for a life of perfection.

Submission to the Guru

"The way to perfection is rugged" the Master says, "There are tigers and bears in the route but if one has a guide with him, there is no difficulty. Then, the tigers and bears move aside." If there is no Guru, there is the danger of falling into a deep yawning pit. It is therefore necessary to make the Guru the sole object of one's thoughts and aims to attain Paramatman. Close contact with the Guru ensures a protection which seems to envelop the disciple like an aura helping and guiding him. Submission to the Guru is necessary. The instances of persons who have, before our times, surrendered to the Guru and who have profited thereby move us to secure the blessings of the Guru. It is said that if the Guru is pleased all miraculous powers come of their own accord. The stories of Padmapada-charya and Ekalavya who had surrendered to their Guru amply illustrate the necessity of devotion and submission to the Guru.

The Guru Comes

The main test of a teacher in the realm of spirituality is a simple one. He has seen God and can show Him to you. Only Him should we call a Guru who is able to show God directly to our sight. To Him, we should hand over all wealth, mind and body and take from Him the Atma for which we aspire. The real teacher is a rarity but he is not extinct. When the disciple yearns for one, he does come. Such a Guru has the indications that can make him recognizable.

And the Unique Opportunity

Ungratefulness is a sin. One ought not to forget the ordinary help one gets from others in daily life. If such is the case, what shall we say of the one who forgets his Guru who imparts to him the knowledge leading to Moksha? There is no other sin that is equal to the one which forgets the Guru. In all ages, there were persons who deserved the grace of the Lord. In Krita, Treta, Dwapara Yugas, there were many persons who engaged themselves in penances and sacrificial rites and so on and thereby earned the pleasure of the Lord to a very large extent. In Kali Age, the persons seeking the Grace of the Lord are few and if the Lord were to insist upon very high standard of qualification for the aspirants, nobody would come or care to know. Even when such a low standard of qualification, viz. submission to the Guru, has been prescribed, what will be His sorrow if nobody seeks Him, the fountain of mercy? It is better to bow to the two feet of the Guru and take the dust of those feet that forms the Holy Ashes which bring about the quietening of the evil spirit of false perception than to remain ignorant and lose the unique opportunity of gaining the grace of the Lord in this very birth.

16. THE BASIC TENETS OF INDIAN CULTURE

Indian culture is supreme and gorgeous, pure and pristine like the Himalayas, with its brilliant array of beautiful concepts lighting its path.

It rests securely on the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Gita and the great Epics, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Mahabhagavata.

It is a way of life that is inextricably woven with Godhead animating its very texture.

It is a philosophy that makes it possible for humans to become divine and merge with the Universal Spirit.

It is the path that leads one to the state when he says *Tat Tvam Asi* (That art Thou) and *Aham Brahmaasmi* (I am Brahman).

The summit that one can attain is beautifully summed up in Hanuman's reply to Sri Rama.

Sri Rama asked Hanuman, "Who are you?"

Hanuman reverentially replied:

Dehabuddhyaatu daasosmi
Jeevabuddhyaa tvadamsakah
Aatmabuddhyaa tvamevaaha
mitime nischita matih.

"Viewing from the point of view of the body, I am Your servant; as Jeeva I am part of You; as Atma I am You Yourself—that is my considered opinion."

The basic purpose of life is Self-realisation by permeating oneself with the idea that one's existence in this world is to be of God, for God, through God and by God.

This highest concept of Indian culture has been realised by the great seers of old by strict adherence to its basic tenets which are enunciated in the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Gita and the other sacred texts.

Indian culture rests on the idea that God reigns in man when he prays for the well being of all from the amoeba to the highest animate being. The *Mantra* says:

*Tacchamyo ravrineemahe, gaatum yagnaaya gaatum
Yagnapataye; daiveeswastirastunah, oordhvam jigaatu bheshajam;
sanno astu dvipade, sam chatushpade! Om Santissantisanthi.*

Prayer is offered for the protection, peace and welfare of all. Prayer is made for the preservation of the *yagna*, the Lord of the *yagna*, the Devaas, the humans, the bipeds and the quadrupeds.

Indian culture is built on the *yagna* or sacrifice. It is not merely the ritualistic sacrifice but the sacrifice of one's self for the sake of the basic principles that lead to the prosperity and peace of fellow-beings.

It posits the welfare of the Lord of the *yagna* and the Devaas. There can be universal peace when people look upon fellow-beings as themselves—nay, even the lowest creatures in the scale of life are to be similarly treated.

The basic tenets of Indian culture are clearly and concisely put forward in Lesson 9 of Chapter I of the *Taittireeyopanishad*. It sings:—

*Ritamcha Svaadhyaaya pravachanecha!
Satyamcha Svaadhyaaya pravachanecha!
Tapascha Svaadhyaaya pravachanecha!
Damascha Svaadhyaaya pravachanecha!*

Samascha Svaadhyaaya pravachanecha!
Agnischa Svaadhyaaya pravachanecha!
Agnihotramcha Svaadhyaaya pravachanecha!
Atithayascha Svaadhyaaya pravachanecha!
Maanushamcha Svaadhyaaya pravachanecha!
Prajaacha Svaadhyaaya pravachanecha!
Prajanascha Svaadhyaaya pravachanecha!
Prajaatishcha Svaadhyaaya pravachanecha!
Sathyamiti Sathyavachanam Raatitaraha!
Tapa iti Taponityah Paurusishtih!
Svaadhyaaya pravachana Eveti Naaka Maudgalyah!
Taddhi Tapastaddhi tapah!

The *Anuvaaka* states that the practice of *Rita* or what is right and proper as prescribed by the scriptures and one's own cogitation, learning and imparting of the Vedas, *Satya* or truthfulness and sincerity in action, *tapa* or penance meaning religious observances that involve self-denial, self-restraint, being devoid of passions, peace of mind, tending of consecrated fires, offering oblations to the fires daily, morning and evening, sacred fires, offering oblations to bring about human welfare, bringing up a family, procreating at the ordained period of time, performing the marriage of a son leading to the birth of a grandson—all these have to be first done by one to be eligible to attain self-realisation by means of the power of introspection with a keen desire for liberation.

The sage *Rathitara*, who never strayed from the path of truth, held out that truthfulness alone is sufficient to lead man to the divine goal. *Paururishi*, the sage who was constant in performing *tapas* said that devout austerity alone was enough while *Naaka* of the *vamsa* of *Mudgala* stressed upon the study of the Vedas and imparting them to others saying that assuredly is *Tapas* and indeed that is *tapas*.

The foregoing gives us a comprehensive picture of the basic tenets of our culture. Even there, there is scope for one to adopt one or the other method for self-realisation.

Indian culture lays the utmost stress on *dharma*. Every one should follow his *dharma*, which begins with his duty to himself, his family and society.

The family is to be reared by him with paternal affection, filial love, fraternal care and marital caressing. Duties are enjoined on him with respect to the preservation of his family as a unique unit.

As a householder, a person has duties to perform to please the *pitrus* or his ancestors and the deities. He perpetuates them and feels one with them. He has to go by the *mantra* which says. *Maatru devobhava! Pitru devobhava! Aachaarya devobhava! Atithi devobhava!*

The mother is to be regarded on par with God as she gives birth to the person and rears him up. The father has to be worshipped as God as he gives the physical body and maintains him. The Acharya or the preceptor is to be regarded as God as he gives spiritual birth to him leading him to the path of the knowledge of the divine and making him attain godhead. The *atithi* or the guest is Naaraayana Himself and he is to be catered to.

The attributes to be developed in one are very finely described by Dharmaraja, the eldest of the Paandavaas, in the following words:

*Sathyam maataa pitaa Gnanam
Dharmam bhraata Dayaa sakhaa
Saantih patnee Kshmaa putraa
sshadete mama baandhavaah!*

“Truth is my mother, knowledge or Gnana is my father, Dayaa or kindness is my friend, peace is my wife and mercy is my son. These six qualities are my relatives.”

That is, these six qualities are the *sine qua non* of Indian culture, of which Dharmaraja is a true manifestation.

Apart from this, the code of conduct to be followed by every individual is reflected in how Nakula, the brother of Dharmaraja, felt. He observes:

*Maatruvat paradaaraanscha
Paradravyaani loshtavat
Aatmavatsarvabhootani
Yahpasyati Sapasyati.*

“One who regards the wives of others as his mother, who looks upon money belonging to others as balls of earth and who treats all other beings as he treats his own self is indeed the real seer. He becomes the knower of Brahman.”

Indian culture lays the greatest emphasis on the sacredness of the marriage tie. The wife is the *Sahadharmachaarini*. She is the co-partner in all the rites and actions performed by her husband. Their tie is eternal and unbreakable. Chastity is the *must* in the life of a woman. Our culture is embedded in that idea. Sita, Savitri, Anasuya and other peerless ladies of virtue typify our glorious culture. *Kula* and *gotra* have to be kept pure. *Streeshu dushtaasu Vaashneya Jaayate Varnasamkaraah!* If the women are fallen, the Varna becomes adulterated and hybrids result, leading to the destruction of the essential purity of family life.

The *Upanishads* give the necessary rituals for looking after the soul from conception to conception dealing with the life before, during and after.

The *Ramayana* holds forth the ideal man and the ideal woman, the ideal mother, the ideal brother, the ideal friend

and the ideal follower that invigorate Indian culture. It vivifies the truth:

*Yaanti Nyaayapravrittasya
Tiryamchopi Sahaayataam
Apanthananthu gacchantaam
Sodaropi vimunchati*

"Even animals help one who follows the path of Dharma while even the brother leaves one who pursues the unrighteous path."

The *Bhagavata* puts forward the most potent aspect of Indian culture where the devotee of the Lord is extolled, where unflinching faith and devotion to the Lord is shown to be the path for self-realisation. The Bhakta may be of whatever caste, of whatever lineage and of whatever literary level. His wholehearted concentration on the Lord redeems him and fulfils his obligations to the Devas, the *pitris* and the *rishis*.

Narada Bhakti Sutras say:

*Modanti pitarau, Nrityanti Devataaha, Sanaathacheyam
Bhoorbhavati! (71st Sutra).*

The Pitaras are elated when they find their descendant to be an ardent devotee of the Lord; for him the Devas dance with joy and by his being on earth, Mother earth becomes safe.

There is no need for further amplification of this sutra as the lives of our seers and great men illustrate it.

To sum up, *Satyam Vada, Dharmam Chara* (Speak the Truth; follow Dharma) form the two glistening eyes of our radiant culture forming the all-embracing tenets of our lives.

Unfortunately at the present juncture, *Satyam Vadha, Adharmam chara* (Kill the Truth; follow Adharma) has become the motto of the present day world and hence all the misery and travail!

17. ATMA VIDYA (SELF-KNOWLEDGE)

Vidya or knowledge, as it is generally understood, is the knowledge arising from the world experience. It is based on the knowledge of objects gained through the senses and is called "sense knowledge" or relative knowledge. There is knowledge which is eternal or absolute and is called another "self-knowledge" or knowledge of the Atman. Therefore, it is necessary to inquire into the nature of *Jiva*, *jagat* and *goal of life* as below:—

- (1) Who is *Jiva* or individual soul?
- (2) How does the *Jiva* come into existence? and
- (3) What is the ultimate destination or what is it that the *Jiva* has to realise in life?

In the *Gita*, the Divine Teacher Sri Krishna says, "the individual soul is but a part of Me". It is meant that He, the individual soul, has been in existence from time without beginning. The *Upanishads* describe the individual lives coming out from the Supreme Self, like sparks from a fire. Coming as they do from the great fire, the sparks (Individual souls) bear the heat and lustre (*chaitanya* or the capacity to know). As the sparks move farther and farther away from the parent fire they lose their heat and lustre. Similarly, the individual souls lose their godliness as they move away from the *Paramatman*. Here then lies the cause for the unhappiness arising out of the turning away from God, which in other words is called *Samsara*. The spark when it goes farther away from the fire ultimately ends up as a piece of dark charcoal. The penance of joy of the individual souls becomes shrouded in ignorance by their turning away from God. Again, just as the spark from the fire which when it travels back to fire regains its lustre and heat, so also the individual soul when it abides in the Atman or self, regains omniscience.

Man desires to possess that which he likes most. But the mundane things are liable to be disliked when they become unpleasant. Even the food that is liked most turns out to be harmful due to one's ill-health. The only thing that is lovable at all times is the *Atman* in us. The *Atman* is not an external phenomenon or thing. It is lovable for its own sake as it is associationless and is therefore called "*Priyatman*". It is also called "*Pratyak*", that which is inside. By this statement, it does not mean that *Atman* is within us as in the sense the milk is in a vessel. The *Atman* is a separate entity and is a living and driving force standing apart from the body. Yet, it can be known by the mind. The inner consciousness is one and one only. But, at times it is known by its four functions such as mind, intellect, consciousness and conceit. These are like the vehicles of transport that carry us. They may be either owned by us or hired. Similarly, the instruments that help us to attain knowledge of the self are either acquired by us in the previous birth or they may be acquired in this birth by performing virtuous actions and leading our lives in accordance with the ways and means prescribed to us either by scriptures or by a Guru. The *Atman* is lovable by one and all. We must try to know the Self or *Atman* because it is the highest object of love. The *Atman* has neither birth nor death which are the qualities of the body. The root cause of all sorrows is our ignorance of *Atman*—the pure substance.

To acquire self-knowledge, the advice and guidance of a Sat-Guru is essential. The advice and the grace of the Teacher make the sun of true knowledge and dispel the darkness of ignorance in us. But people do not believe in this great truth in spite of their daily experience. Though the planet sun is of enormous size, we see it as a small object and consider it so, in spite of our scientific knowledge that it is a very big one. In the same way, masked by ignorance, the true nature of self is

not realised in spite of our being endowed with intelligence and subtle thought. The deluding potency of *Maya* which makes impossible possible, makes us to identify the *Atman* with the body and mind. This is because we have not realised the *Atman* in actual practice. The blessings of the Guru and the sages are the best means to realise the *Atman*. We must be blessed with their Grace.

OM—TAT—SAT!

18. PANCH KOSHA VIVEKA

In the last article on "ATMA VIDYA", the need to realise the *Atman* was stressed and the *Atman* was described as the eternal knowledge by knowing which man attains everlasting peace in this very birth. The knower of *Atman* becomes the *Jivan Mukta*. The knowledge of *Atman* leading to bliss consciousness is dealt with in the present article which covers an enquiry into the five Koshas or sheaths in which the *Atman* appears to be encased in the body.

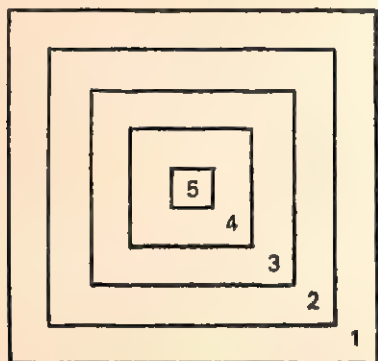
The life period of a man may be broadly divided into five stages.

- (i) *Childhood*: (1 to 10 years): The period is prominent in physical growth. There is a great desire for food.
- (ii) *Boyhood*: (10 to 20 years): The period covers physical activity and exercise that demands attention.
- (iii) *Youth*: (20 to 40 years): The period is covered with full play of mental activity and the mind desires to entertain likes and dislikes.
- (iv) *Middle Age*: (40 to 60 years): Yoga or desire to know God comes generally at this age. The intellect desires to know the truth during middle age.
- (v) *Old Age*: (60 to 80 years): The old age is said to begin when the body, mind and intellect seek rest and peace.

The five different periods of life indicate the five predominant characteristics of the period viz., food, prana, desire, knowledge and peace. However the five characteristics do exist in all the five stages of life, though each one finds its accentuated expression in a particular stage. Thus the human personality can be considered as being clothed in five coatings of these in-

dividual predominant characteristics which are present in every human being. These coatings are known as *Koshas* or sheaths or attributes (see figure).

They are:—



- (1) *Annamaya* or the Food sheath.
- (2) *Pranamaya* or Vital sheath.
- (3) *Manomaya* or the Mental sheath.
- (4) *Vignanamaya* or the Knowledge sheath.
- (5) *Anandamaya* or Bliss sheath.

The five sheaths are experienced by one and all. The five sheaths are in full play during waking state. The sheaths from *Pranamaya* to *Anandamaya* are active in dream state and the *Anandamaya* sheath alone is active in dreamless sleep. The *Annamaya* Kosha is less subtle than the *Pranamaya* and the *Anandamaya* Kosha is the subtlest of all koshas and the intermediate koshas are located in the order of subtlety.

There is a spring of perennial joy in the heart of every living being and is called *self* or *Atman*. The joy seeks expression in two ways. The expression of joy that is expressed or manifested

through the five koshas is called the *relative good* and the expression of joy transcending the five sheaths is called the *Absolute good*. The *relative good* experienced in the *Annamaya* sheath is known as health, in the *Vital* sheath as strength, in the *Manomaya* sheath as comfort, in the *Vignanamaya* sheath as knowledge and in *Anandamaya* kosha as peace. The joy experienced in *Samadhi* is beyond all understanding and is the joy of the *Atman* which is the *Absolute good*. The joy of *Brahman* gets various names in world experience due to the various attributes just as the atmospheric air becomes breeze, wind, whirlpool, storm, tornado etc. by virtue of limiting boundaries and particular movements which define them for the time being.

It is therefore seen that each one of the limited joys admits of an infinite variety of joy and that each variety of joy admits of an infinite grade and intensity of that joy. Those who seek the *relative good* have to perform *Karma* or desireful activities. The *Vedas* are full of such activities for all types of people seeking *relative good*. But the *Vedanta* deals with the *Absolute good* for the attainment of unlimited joy.

Man has to return to his Master, the *Absolute*, from whom he has come and with whom he can find life everlasting. The realisation of the *Absolute good* can be accomplished only with perfected attributes or sheaths and that the perfection of the sheaths is feasible only on this earth, for which repeated births are quite essential. The five attributes beginning from *Annamaya Kosha* upto *Anandamaya Kosha* are to be purified by practising *Shama*, *Dama*, *Uparati*, *Titiksha* and *Shraddha* respectively.

The result of the *Sadhana* leads to *Samadhana* and *Samadhi*. The word *Samadhi* is used here for the separation of the soul from the five sheaths that leads to the identification of the soul with *Brahman*.

19. DIWALI AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

The festival of Diwali or Deepavali (row of lights) is of great spiritual import. It signifies the emergence of the Soul from out of the Darkness of Avidya to the Light of Vidya or Awakening. It underlines the exhortation: *Tamasoma Jyotirgamaya: Asatoma Satgamaya: Mrityorma Amritamgamaya*—Emerge into the Light of Awakening or Vidya from the Darkness of Ignorance or Avidya; emerge into Being from Non-Being; come out from Death into Deathlessness.

It marks the annihilation of the arrogant Ego which becomes punctuated with powerlust and becomes demented into denying God and the Godly.

Narakasura

Naraka was an Asura or giant who regarded himself as being all-powerful. He conquered the Devas, put their women in prison, took away the luminous earrings of Aditi, the Mother of Gods, appropriated Varunacchatra for himself and proclaimed himself as the overlord of all the worlds. He ordered that whatever was unique, noteworthy and beautiful should be delivered unto him. According to his instructions, his minions brought sixteen thousand Princesses of ravishing beauty, the pretty bewitching Yaksha ladies and those of the Kinnaras and the Vidyadharas. They were all kept in prison. He posted at the borders his sentinels, four in number, namely, the Asura with five heads, Mura, Hayagriva, Nisumbha and Panchajana, all giants of huge stature and invincible valour and strength, to arrest the entry of any interloper.

He witnessed a Yajna being performed by the saints and hermits resident in Badari Vana. The thought went into his mind that they should perform all sacrifices in his name, invoking him as the All-Giver.

He thought that he should be the Yajnapati. The Rishis were amused when he asked them to do the sacrifices in his name as the Yajneswara. They ignored him and when he persisted, they ridiculed him. He took umbrage at it, spoiled their sacrifices and announced by edict that all Yajnas should be thereafter in his honour as he was the Yajneswara. He ordered that all the oblations in sacrifices should only be intended for him. This act paved the way for his destruction.

The celebrated Rishis came over to Lord Sri Krishna and poured out their tale of woe. So also did Indra, the Lord of Heaven. This made Sri Krishna vow to kill the giant and establish the Rule of Dharma. He was accompanied by His wife, Sathyabhama, who wanted to witness the military prowess of the Lord.

He reached Pragjyotisha and broke the citadels round the city. He blew his Conch, the Panchajanya, that struck terror into the hearts of his enemies. The giant Mura's five heads were cut off by the Lord's whirling Disc. All the sentinels of Naraka were killed. This terrified Naraka who had no other go but to face the Lord. He did so. On seeing Him, Sathyabhama wanted to give respite to the Lord and herself do battle with Naraka. The giant was thunderstruck at the heroic stand of the Consort of the Lord and he was at the end of his tether. Then Lord Krishna took the field and killed the giant.

Having been afraid of Narakasura, the people did not even illuminate their abodes while he lived. Now that they were freed from this fear which held them as in a vice, they lighted their lamps and brightened their households with brilliant lights.

Mother's Boon

Naraka at the time of his death perceived Sathyabhama to be the incarnation of Mother Earth and he prayed to her for her forgiveness and requested her to give him the boon that

his life should be an abject reminder to the vicious to beware, and he should be perpetuated for all time to come in this connection. The Mother granted his request and so is it that Naraka's debacle is celebrated as the Festival of Deepavali or Emergence into Light.

The earrings of Aditi, the Varunacchatra and all the treasures were restored to the rightful owners.

Mother Earth pleaded for mercy to be shown to Bhagadatta, son of Naraka, who was thereupon made the ruler of Pragjyotisha. The Lord was garlanded with the Vaijyanthimala. He released all the ladies and Princesses to be sent to their homes. As the sixteen thousand princesses would not leave him, the Lord sent them to Dwaraka.

Significance

This episode signifies the victory of Virtue over Vice, through intense devotion to the Lord. The Ego becomes clouded and tarnished with the four qualities of *Kama*, *Krodha*, *Lobha* and *Moha* and loses its pristine purity. The four are represented by the four Asuras who were kept as sentinels against virtue by Naraka. The Tamas or darkness is caused by the five senses or the Panchendriyas, which formed the five heads of Mura. When given free play, the Panchendriyas ruin our wisdom and perception of Godliness and make us preys to Mura, leading to bondage under Asuric nature. The transient nature of things (the *Asath*) is forgotten and the Truth or *Sath* that is Brahman is not comprehended and realised. The ultimate result is the cycle of deaths without *Amritatva* or Eternal Life. To get over this, a supreme effort has to be made, through abject surrender to the Lord. This awakening is signified in the life of Naraka where the Lord and his Sahadharmacharini combined to kill him to stop his ravages. A person should, therefore, along with his wife follow the injunctions laid in the Shastras. They should lead chaste lives and get illumined by the Divine Light which will enter into them as a consequence.

Vratas

The Festival of Diwali as the Festival of Awakening is also significant as the culmination of a *Vrata* performed by the Divine Mother Gowri from Ashtami (eighth day) of the bright part of the month of Bhadrapada to Amavasya (fifteenth day) of the dark part of the succeeding month to attain her abode in the Lord, which she had forfeited due to conceit on account of Avidya clouding her perception. Even Divine nature is apt to be polluted at the height of its divinity if there is no humility and consciousness of nothingness before the Lord, who is the only Omniscient, Omnipotent and Omnipresent Power. The *Vrata* is called *Kedareswara Vrata*.

The circumstances under which it was performed would reveal to one the mischief that is wrought by Avidya or darkness. Once there was divine conclave on Mount Kailas, the abode of Lord Maheswara who held court. Mother Gowri was beside Him. Rambha, the celestial damsel, executed a unique and out of the way movement to the greatest delight of all present. Then, one Bhrunguriti, an ardent devotee of the Lord, exhibited an equally exquisite dance movement contributing to the highest exhilaration and hilarity of all, leading to the Lord admiring his perfection in the dance. This pleased the bhaktha. He performed *pradakshina* by going round the Lord, excluding the Divine Mother. The Devi asked Maheswara to tell her why Bhrunguriti excluded her in his *pradakshina*. The Lord told her that Yogins and Seekers after the Ultimate Truth do not feel the impelling necessity to propitiate her and seek her help. This roused the ire of Gowri, who withdrew from the Lord's body whose half portion was her auspicious abode. As a consequence, she became afflicted and could not shine as before. She felt desolate and inconsolable. The Devas tried to console her. She left Kailas and went to the ashram of Gautama. She wanted to perform tapas or meditation to regain her former

position in the Lord, which she had lost by her Avidya. Rishi Gautama felt her divine presence and asked her as to why she had graced his ashram. She fell at his feet, recounted her tale of woe and prayed to be vouchsafed a course which would regain for her the Lord's Grace and her original power. She wanted to get back her lost position in the Lord's body and her pre-eminence as the Lord's Counterpart. Rishi Gautama instructed her to perform the *Vrata* from Sukla Ashtami of Bhadrapada till Amavasya of the succeeding month and propitiate the Lord Maheswara, who would surely grant her request. He acquainted her with the *modus operandi* of the *Vrata*. The Devi did so and on Diwali the Lord appeared before her, dispelled her gloom, gave her enlightenment, made her realise the *Sath* and restored her to her original and eternal ambrosial residence in Him.

The festival is thus significant to one and all. One should realise the futility of vice and of denying Godhood and the danger lying in becoming slaves to senses. One should get enlightenment by absolute surrender to the Lord and realise one's nothingness before the Supreme and attain oneness with the Lord by seeking the help of Sadgurus, even as Mother Gowri had done with Rishi Gautama's succour. Let everyone therefore pray on this day of the Festival of Lights for the Divine Light being ever present in his or her consciousness giving Eternal Bliss.

20. WORLD EXPERIENCE

The article on *Panchakosha Viveka* described in brief the five-Koshas or the attributes of the *Jiva* or the soul. The human body is made up of the causal body consisting of the *Anandamaya Kosha* which is experienced in deep sleep. The subtle body consisting of the *Vignanamaya* (Manasic), *Manomaya* (Astral) and the *Pranamaya* (Etheric kosha) is invisible and is experienced in dream state. The physical body consisting of the food sheath is the gross body of man and is experienced in waking state. All the five sheaths are active in the waking state, the causal and the subtle bodies are active in dream state and the causal body alone exists in the deep sleep state.

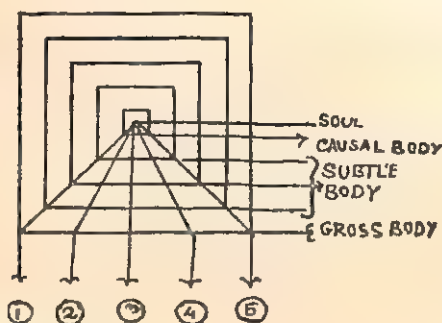
The spirit is immanent and is transcendental. The spirit which is immanent in the body is called the soul and the universal spirit which is transcendental is the oversoul or God. The spirit sheathed in the invisible *Anandamaya kosha* is the soul of man and becomes individualised due to *Avidya* or ignorance. The individual soul takes further sheaths ending with the gross physical body. The soul has to take a silent probation with its exercising body consisting of various attributes or *Koshas* till all the attributes are perfected and the soul gets merged in the universal from where it started its career.

The soul and the spirit are both permanent. The faculties of consciousness and will abide in the soul in spite of the fact that the faculties are operated through the agency of the vehicles or bodies as could be proved by our experience of the three states of existence (viz. waking, dream and sleep states). Further, the three bodies consisting of the five *koshas* are similar to the nervous organisation of the physical body which receives the sense impressions from the visible worlds. The sense impressions are carried to the brain through the nervous system. The brain automatically registers all the impressions

but does not reflect back into physical consciousness all the impressions. There is therefore the discriminating faculty, called "will" that controls the brain. The "will" of man is in his soul to which the will belongs.

There is thus a constant process of action and reaction through the mechanism of the invisible bodies of man since the soul has to send back its instructions to the physical brain through its channels consisting of the invisible bodies. This is similar to the physical perception of external objects in which the brain and the nervous system work and other physical organs of man are interconnected in the external perception. The sense impression has to travel through the invisible bodies and return back to the brain by the soul which is encased in them. The soul does this work by exercising its will. The gross body contains the nervous channels and the invisible bodies are the corresponding channels working for the world experience.

The invisible bodies constitute the mind, which in the ultimate analysis is only consciousness residing in the soul. The consciousness has to work through the brain, to be aware of any sense perception received from the visible and invisible worlds. (See figure)



The result is *Paroksha Gnana* or knowledge arising out of the world experience. There is the other *Gnana* called *Aparoksha Gnana* where the spiritual perception is made possible and allowed to descend into the physical brain without distortion to physical consciousness as in the case of God-realised persons. This is possible for every individual by virtue of the possession of the precious equipment viz. the human body and the various faculties connected with it.

21. SRI VENKATESWARA VAIBHAVA

Sri Venkateswara, or Sri Baalaaji as He is referred to in the North, is the Lord of lords, powerfully manifest in the holy hill of Tirumalai near Tirupati. The hill is also known as Sri Venkataachala.

*Sarva Devaatmako Vishnuh Venkataachala Naayakah
Kalou sa eva samsevyah Sripatih Purushottamah.*

In this Age of Kali, it is only Vishnu, Lord of Venkata Hill, who is all-embracing of all the divinities that are to be worshipped, He being the Lord of Lakshmi and the Supreme Being.

On the banks of the Jaahnavi, a sacrifice was to be performed. The *rishis* were debating as to whom the offerings should be made, as the Lord of Yajna. They should decide on that deity among the Trimoorthis who could give *moksha* or salvation.

They did not, however, have the guts to test the three Gods, Vishnu, Brahma and Maheswara.

But the sage Bhrigu, however, volunteered to do so. He was full of ego, gifted as he was with an occult eye in the leg!

He went at first to Satyaloka, the abode of Brahma. He sat down before Brahma did, and was chided for that. This made him say to Brahma, "You are full of *rajoguna* and as such, you shall not have any worship offered to you hereafter."

He then went at break-neck speed to Mount Kailaas, where the Lord Maheswara was in privacy with the Goddess Paarvathi. Maheswara became angry with him for having come in without announcement. The sage was annoyed at that and he said "You are full of *tamas*. You shall not be worshipped in this form!"

After this, puffed up with pride at having had a walkover on the two deities. Brighu sped to Vaikunta, the abode of Lord Maha Vishnu. The Lord was at the time sporting with His spouse Lakshmi. The sage, at the height of *Ahankaar*, struck with his feet at the chest of the Lord which is the auspicious abode of Sri Maha Lakshmi! Vishnu, the Lord of Maaya, clouded the vision of the sage, and appearing to catch hold of his legs in obelance, destroyed the occult eye in his leg, while offering words of courteous welcome to him!

The sage, bereft of his occult power, realised his limitations now and prayed to Maha Vishnu for compassion. The Lord forgave him.

Sage Bhrigu returned to the concourse of *rishis* on the bank of the Jaahnavi. He declared Lord Vishnu to be the Devottama to whom all worship should be offered to secure salvation.

At Vaikunta, Goddess Maha Lakshmi became irate with Her husband for letting the sage go unpunished for defiling Her seat on the chest of the Lord. Of course, she did not comprehend the significance of the diplomatic act of the Lord. She left Him in a huff.

The Lord thereon became afflicted by Her departure and thinking Sri Venkataachala to be the proper place for staging the denouement of this tiff of love came over at the beginning of Kali to Venkataachala, where He had His abode in an ant hill, west of Swami Pushkarini.

After being incessantly bathed in milk by Aakaasa Raaja, He finally emerged in the present, most attractive and auspicious form of the blissful Archaaroopa. The Lord is a *Swa-yambhoo* (Self-manifested).

Sri Venkateswara is *Trimoorthyaatmaka*. He is the embodiment of the three aspects of *Srishti*, *Sthiti* and *Laya*.

The word "Venkata" has a spiritual significance of the greatest import. It is a combination of the powerful *beejaaksharaas* or seed-words "VA", "EEM", "KA" and "TA". "VA" is Vishnubeeja. "EE Kaara" is significant of Maha Maaya or Lakshmi. So "VEM" is the compounded *beejaakshara* standing for the inseparable Lord Vishnu and Maha Lakshmi or Purusha and Prakriti. "KA" is the seedletter symbolising Brahma while "TA" is the *beejaakshara* signifying Maheswara. Thus, "Venkata" is the combination of the powers of the Trimoorthis! Its Lord, Maha Vishnu, is therefore *Sarvadevaatmaka*.

Venkata is the Paramabindu, resident in *Sahasraara-Chakra*, so that Lord Venkateswara is the Supreme above, the Paramabindu!

The seven holy hills of Sri Venkataachala represent the seven *lokas*, viz: Bhur, Bhuvah, Suvah, Maha, Jana and Satya. They represent the Devas, viz: Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra Maheswara, Sadaasiva and Paraasakti and the Chakras, Mulaadhaara, Manipoora, Swaadhishtaana, Anaahata, Visuddhi, Aajnaa and Sahasraara. The summit where the Lord stays is Sree Peetha!

The Vedas say: "*Araayia Kaanevikate girim gaccha Sadaanve. Siribitasya satvabhihi tebhishtvaachaataayaamasi*" (*Rigveda* VIII Adhyaya, 8th Anuvaaka, Vachana 13, Mandal 10, sooktha 155). It means: "O poverty stricken fellow! O maimed of the body having association with the enemies of *Purushaarthaas*! Go to Venkatagiri Sree Peetha, mix with the devotees therein and get rid of your ailment."

It is evident, therefore, that Venkatagiri or Sri Venkataachala, the seat of Lord Venkateswara, has Sree-Peetha, whose ruling deity is Baalaa-Tripurasundari, thus giving rise to the name Sri Baalaaaji to Him!

Sri Venkateswara is thus Vishnu having the Rudra aspect with Panchabhootha-tattwa from Moolaadhaara to Visuddha,

with Paarvati in Aajnaa-chakra and Hamsa-roopa Naaraayana who is in Pranavaakaara in the Paramabindu represented by Akaara, Ukaara and Makaara in Sahasraara-chakra.

Sri Venkateswara represents Shanmukha also. The *Nakshatra* of Lord Venkateswara is *Sravana*. Subrahmanya is Saravanabhava or *Sravana* born. The *Sreevatsa* on the chest of Lord Venkateswara is akin to the sign made on the chest of Lord Subrahmanya when Indra hurled his *Vajraayudha* at him which merged in him, causing that sign. Sri Venkateswara is also *Subrahmanyaatmaka-Vishnu*.

The idol has all the markings pertaining to Rudra, Baalaa-Tripurasundari, Subrahmanya and Vishnu. He is *Ekam Sat*, the Upanishadic Brahman, with the *Sthiti* aspect most powerfully established in Him. The various saints sang of Him severally. Salvite saints sang of Him as Hara and Harihara. So also did the early Alwaars. The Lord's names contain the names of Siva, Sakti and Kumaara also. He is called "*Kaartikeya Vapurdharaaya Namah*."

Lord Venkateswara is also called Sreenivasa Peruman, being the Lord of Sree and the Sree Peetha of Venkatagiri. The hill is called Sreesaila also. That is why it is attracting all the teeming millions of the country who offer their all to Him.

The Lord married the daughter of Aakaasa Raaja of Narayanavana, the goddess Padmaavati, who was the Amsa-avataara of Goddess Lakshmi. But He wanted to regain Maha Lakshmi. He came to Kolhapur, where He found Her *archa-murthi*, established by the sage Agasthya. He waited for ten years to propitiate Her.

The divine voice from the sky directed Him to go to the Swarnamukhi river, dig a tank on its northern bank, get golden lotuses, put them in it, rear them and contemplate on the Goddess Mahaalakshmi pondering over the *Ekaakshara Mantra*

or *Sahasraakshara Mantra* using those lotuses in worship. Vishnu did likewise after founding the *Archaamurthi* of the Sun god *Surya*, to aid Him in the rearing of the golden lotuses.

After twelve years, in the month of *Kaartik*, in *Sukla Paksha*, on *Panchami*, Friday, ruled by the asterism *Uttaraashaada*, in *Maitra Muhurtha*, Goddess *Lakshmi* came out in all Her brilliance amidst the thousand petals of the golden lotus and took over Her position in the Lord as of yore. It is this tank that is called *Padmasarovar* and found in *Tiruchaanur* or *Tiru Sukanur* where the sage *Suka* had *darshan* of Lord *Srinivaasa*!

Sri Venkateswara Vaibhava is indescribable. Being the highest of the highest deities, He is *Kali-Yuga-Prathyaksha-Daiva*, gratifying the desires of the devout. That is why it is said:

*"Venkataadri samam Sthaanam Brahmaande naasthi kinchana
Venkatesa samo devo na bhooto na bhavishyati."*

—There is no place in this wide Universe which is the peer of *Sri Venkataachala* and there is no god to equal *Venkateswara* either in the past or in the future. *Venkataadri* abounds in the most sacred *teerthaas*. It has all sorts of flora and fauna. It is called *Chintaamani giri*, as it grants all the desires of the seekers. It is *Jnaanaadri*, as it gives enlightenment. It is *Adishesha* who took that form of Mountain at the command of the Lord who is, therefore, called *Seshaachalapathi*.

*Naaraayanaamsa sambhotah Seshorgiri roopa dhruth
Tasyopari prabhoota ye thruna gulma latadayah
Tehi Sthavara roopena vasantho yogi poorushah
Brahma Rudraadi devebhyo yoginaamita tejasah.*

Great yogins, saints and gods like *Brahma* and *Rudra* are resident in *Sri Venkataadri* even as trees and shrubs. As such,

the abode of Lord Venkateswara is the most sacred place on Mother Earth and its sanctity must be kept at all costs protecting it from modern pollutions.

Venkateswara Vaibhava will be eternally glistening if the *archana* to the deity is carried on scrupulously, strictly and if the Bhaktas that come for pilgrimage are well cared for; for, *Teerthee Kurvanti teerthaani*—it is the holy pilgrims that sanctify the *teertha* and their service is the Lord's service!

22. ALAYA VIJNANA

SELF-REALISATION

The mind is a definite form of all-powerful absolute consciousness assumed by it through its own will power. It is the evolution and involution of the world. The purity or impurity of it, is our freedom or bondage. The essence of the mind is its imagination. The mind is somehow to be distinguished from the self as ornaments of gold are distinguished from gold. The *Brahman* is consciousness without any object present in it, whereas Brahman in definite form, is the mind.

The mind is in essence pure and the influence of *Avidya* or ignorance makes it defiled. In spite of *Avidya*, the mind itself is eternal, clear, pure and not subject to transformation. The two aspects of *Avidya* are ignorance and knowledge. Knowledge destroys ignorance. The one aspect of *Avidya* destroys the other aspect. It is like the washing act of a washerman who washes impurities of clothes with other kinds of impurities like soap. The Self realises itself, when the two opposite aspects of *Avidya* are negated.

Three Manifestations

The mind assumes different names and forms while engaged in various activities as an actor assumes several forms on the stage. There are three grades in the manifestation of the mind from the point of view of grossness, viz. (1) *Jiva*, (2) *Ahankara* and (3) *Deha*, which are the three manifestations. The *Jiva* is very subtle in character and may be considered as Absolute Self, sheathed in the spiritual encasement. The *Ahankara* is the grosser aspect of *Jiva*, due to the latter's tendency towards objectivity, just as a spark of fire grows in volume on account of increase of fuel. The *Ahankara* further assumes the physical body by the power of desire to enjoy the objects of desire. The *Jiva* stands clothed in the eight-fold

subtle body consisting of the mind, the intellect, the ego and the five subtle elements. The subtle body is gradually experienced as the physical body by the *jiva*. The physical is therefore self-created by the latter and enters into it like a silkworm in its cocoon.

Intense desire for objects is, therefore, the cause for bondage. He experiences bondage who experiences pleasures and pains. The realm of bondage spreads to all aspects of our being, viz., ignorance on intellectual side and limited interest and purpose on the volitional side, forgetting that we are the Absolute Self.

The experience of liberation is nothing mysterious. It is only coming to the consciousness of a fact that is always true. We live, move and have our being in the ocean of *Brahman*. The wise have easily crossed over the ocean of samsara with the help of the boat of knowledge alone. The world experience comes to an end only through the reality of one's own mind, not by any other way. The human body is the temple of God—*Alayavijnana*—probably better than any other ever built by man. It is through knowledge alone that the God residing within the heart can be found out and identified. The *Atman* is to be worshipped with one thing alone, which is always easily obtainable everywhere, viz. knowledge. The worship itself is the best *dhyana* (meditation) and is the highest kind of worship and the greatest of all yogas.

Supreme Self

The Supreme Self (*Atman*) dwells in our own inner being. The *Atman* has to be seen by one's own purified intellect turned Inwards—TIRUPATHI—*Tiru* means turn and see and *pathi* means Lord. The Lord is easily seen in a pure intellect as space is seen reflected in a clean mirror. The mind is the dim reflection of the radiant Heart where the Lord resides; and the human body is the projection of the mind for the

residence of the Lord—*Dehvo Devalaya*. The body is the temple of God is the truth, which has to be realised only in this birth. Human body is precious because of the unique brain and the spinal centres and is like the pearl oyster that contains the precious pearl. The precious pearl is the *Atman*. The *Atman* has to be realised by purification of the mind which is effected through association with wise men, cultivating noble virtues and through the grace of Sad-Guru.

23. PRAPANCHA: THE UNIVERSE

That which is lighted up by the five senses is called *Prapancha* or the Universe in which all of us live and have our being. There are the three factors (1) spirit (2) matter and (3) the Unifier of the two, viz., spirit and matter. The self is the spirit and it has no connection with anything. It is actionless, associationless and causationless. It is only witness. All other things including the mind are proved to be matter. Matter does not know its own existence.

The Unifier is the five senses and the mind. The five senses are those of sight, sound, touch, smell and taste and have their source in the mind. The self sees the universe through the five senses and the mind by uniting with matter (the five senses and the mind).

The result of the union of matter and spirit is the universe of knowledge, perception and sensation. These are called the phenomena. So, the universe is nothing but a collection of infinite phenomena. *Prapancha* is therefore not a simple and self-existing entity. It is a compound. The moment it is split up into its factors, spirit and matter, it vanishes. The universe rests between spirit and matter. If one were to separate oneself from the two factors, there is no universe for him. The universe is only an illusory attribute to the self like a snake in a rope.

Truth is not comfortable, unless one reaches its climax. Human nature is very conservative. It does something and having done that finds it hard to get out of it. The mind will not receive new thoughts because they bring discomfort. If the mind is the connecting medium of spirit and matter the whole universe is in the mind and it is pervaded by the spirit and inseparably connected with it. It is an undeniable fact that we are so constituted that it does not seem possible for us to be away with the universe. We are born with the idea that

it is a reality and we seem to depend upon it for our happiness and our very existence.

The perfect and all-knowing sages have pointed out that the so-called material cravings are the source of our misery. They bring innumerable births and deaths and accompanying troubles. It is, therefore, necessary to get rid of the very idea of the universe. Universe being a compound of spirit and matter, the moment it is split up into its factors, it dissolves. This condition is called *Moksha* and is possible through the help of a *Sadguru*.

24. SAMPRASADA VIDYA

The state of *Samprasada* of the *Jiva* is attained through the technique of *vichara* or reasoning and is called *Samprasada Vidya*. The *Vidya* is based on the experience of the soul that goes into deep sleep, completely serene all round. But this experience is not tantamount to *jnana*. *Samprasada Vidya* describes the method of attaining *Moksha* through reasoning based on one's own *anubhava*.

The *Sruti* says that *Maya* reflecting *Brahman* creates both *Jiva* and *Easwara*. *Jiva* and *Easwara*, in their turn, create the whole of the rest of the universe. The *Jiva* is said to be in *Mohanidra* from the waking state to ultimate release. Its creation is the cause of all pleasure and pain experienced in *Samsara*. The *Easwara* is said to be in *Yoga-nidra* and His creation extends from His determination to create, down to His entrance into the created objects. The one Reality is the substratum of both *Jiva* and *Jagat*.

The Reality, which is the self of all beings, can be distinguished to exist in seven stages in its embodied state. The great awakening into self-realisation is called *Samprasada*, which is the goal of human birth. The seven stages are (1) *Ajnana* (ignorance); (2) *Avarana* (veiling); (3) *Vikshepa* (projection); (4) *Paroksha jnana* (indirect knowledge); (5) *Aparoksha jnana* (direct knowledge); (6) *Shoka Nivritti* (cessation of grief) and (7) *Samprasada* (rise of perfect satisfaction). The self is said to be affected by the seven stages which are the cause of its bondage and also of release. The first three stages bind the *Jiva* to *Samsara* and the last four stages lead the *Jiva* to *Samprasada*.

The stages of *Ajnana* and *Avarana* constitute the causal body of the *Jiva* which, as a result of the firm habit of many births, repeatedly thinks that the body is the self and that the world is real, whereas the truth is that the self is different from the body and the world is unreal. The erroneous convic-

tion is destroyed by reasoning based on experience. *Jnana* is the result of *vichara* based on *Anubhava*.

The fourth stage of the *sadhana* is to get *paroksha jnana*, or indirect knowledge. Our experience of the waking state indicates the essential feature of duality in our consciousness, which implies that the experienced must be different from and other than the experienter in order to be experienced. The experience is extended to the cognition of the body, mind and intellect which are not the real 'I' or the experienter. Therefore, the indirect knowledge that "the real experienter exists" is *paroksha jnana*. The *anubhava* or the existence or the Real 'I' was there, but we were ignorant of the truth. The implications of the ordinary experience are to be made explicit by reasoning in terms of thought. The same technique can be applied for obtaining *aparoksha jnana* or direct knowledge.

Of the many experiences, we have the experience of dreamless sleep, which is of special significance. The seers of *Upanishads* considered the experience of deep sleep as a treasure of gold over which we pass up and down every day. The reality of the non-dual *Brahman* is grounded on the experience of *shushupthi* which confers *Brahmanubhava* to the *jivas*. When the implications of *Brahmanubhava* are made explicit in terms of thought, we get *Brahma Jnana*. This is the stage of direct knowledge and is possible only in the waking state when the mind is available for reflection. The dream state is not considered here as the dream state comes under the category of the past waking state.

The result of the *Brahma Jnana* puts a stop to the sorrows of *Samsara* and the aspirant becomes a *Jivanmukta*. The last stage is *Samprasada* when the *Jnani* attains *Siddhis* and becomes the self of all. The three kinds of afflictions of the body corresponding to the three bodies, viz. causal, subtle and gross are no longer experienced and the *jnani* attains the state of the *Sad-Guru*.

25. WHAT IS BHARATIYA VIDYA?

Bharatiya Vidya lofty as the Himalayas is like the mighty course of the Ganga. It is perennial, rich and holy. It is not a fixed dogma or an isolated strain of thought but a set of revelations fed by a confluence of insights. The insights that dawned on the great seers in their silent and solitary meditations constitute the bedrock of this ancient vidya. It supplies at once the view and way of life. It is thus both philosophy and religion—Brahma Vidya and Yoga Shastra.

In India, religion is the consummation of philosophy. Truths are intended for incorporation into the actual conduct of life. And conversely the conduct of life is oriented in every detail towards realising in one's self the ultimate Truth. It is because life in India was organised as a preparation for the art of self-realisation, the tradition of this Bharatiya Vidya is alive and dynamic till today, enshrined as it is in the *Upanishads*, *Gita* and the *Puranas* and epics of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* which are the gifts of the great Seers and Siddha Purushas—the teachers who knew the secret of the Self and who had the *Atma-Sakshatkara*.

The art of self-realisation is not unknown to other countries in the world. But in Bharat, due to the excellence of *Bhakti* the ardour of the disciple to learn from the teacher and the fact of the living presence amidst us even today of the divine souls in human form who have seen the Truth as clearly as day-light, Bharatiya Vidya glitters like the pole-star in the spiritual firmament. It is to be noticed that India is like the eyes of this great Vidya as only here the Truth has been worked out thoroughly and its significance concretely demonstrated.

The one great truth that the Seers discovered was that reality is one. "Truth is one. Sages name it variously" declares the sage in the *Rig Veda*. Great saints of India pronounced in

no uncertain terms the same discovery. This intuition into the nature of Truth as one, has made Bharatiya Vidya the most catholic and universal of spiritual traditions in its scope, aim and outlook. All religions are more or less faltering glimpses and no religion is totally false. Even the worship of the Totem is not completely without its value. The faiths of the world are looked upon as members of a spiritual fellowship and federation. The unity of Truth is reflected in the unity of man.

If religions of the world are only various approaches to Truth with their own dignity, there are various paths to reach Truth even in one and the same religion. The methods are determined by the competence of the seeker. What is food for one may be poison for another. Mental, moral and spiritual fitness qualifies the religious man for any specific discipline. The methods of knowledge, of action, of devotion, of meditation and of service are prescribed according to the eligibility of the spiritual trainee. As a consequence of this, no man, according to Bharatiya Vidya is so mean as to be debarred from spiritual efforts.

Again, Bharatiya Vidya assures us that the individual souls are none other than Reality. One universal consciousness breaks up as it were on its own accord into different centres of individual consciousness. "That thou art" (*Tattvam-asi*) is the great text of the *Upanishads*, declaring the oneness of living beings with that supreme consciousness. This pronouncement has a profound implication and far-reaching consequence. All living beings are essentially equal in their fundamental worth. A spiritual democracy follows as a logical corollary of this position. Not only human unity, but the unity of the entire creation is brought home to us as a living truth. Love and charity are the possession of man as naturally as the light and heat are of the Sun, and the gravitation is of Nature. Love is the law of life.

Bharatiya Vidya places before everyone the goal of getting release (*Moksha*) from the cycle of transmigration. To realise in oneself the truth of his own divine nature on the ground of the fact that Truth is all, is the royal road to release. How can there be a limitation of the unlimited? To realise and remember that one is deathlessly divine is to refuse to be drawn by the senses and the mind into a sense of selfish individuality. When the vision is narrowed and identity forgotten, one is helplessly gravitated into the whirlpool of birth and death. "Know Thyself" is the central call of Bharatiya Vidya. The *Kathopanishad* gives us an imagery which is well worth noticing.

आत्मानं रथिनं विद्धि शरीरं रथमेव तु ।

बुद्धिं तु सारथिं विद्धि मनः प्रग्रहमेव च ।

इन्द्रियाणि हयान्याहुः विषयांस्तेषु शोचरान् ॥

"Know the body to be the chariot; the intellect to be the charioteer; the mind to be the reins; the senses to be the horses; and the sense-objects to be the highway. But know the self to be the master of the chariot."

Life is a pilgrimage. The bodies are the mid-way houses to be lived in for some time and forsaken when the time comes. While alive, the chariot of the body, mind and the intellect is to be employed to progress. The horses must be controlled to high purpose and with courage.

The doctrine of Karma and rebirth which is the distinguishing feature of Bharatiya Vidya signifies the moral worth of man and treats lives as opportunities for spiritual growth. Man is responsible for what he does. If he forgets Truth willfully and acts as though he is independent he lets himself into the blind necessity of Karma. He has to reap what he has sown. The force of this action recoils upon him with the inevitability of a physical law because he is acting in obedience to the dictates of ignorance or forgetfulness of Truth.

On the contrary, when he acts in accordance with Truth he is no more bound by the acts that he does. When he has realised himself as one with Brahman because his own being is Brahman, he is at once free from the claims of Karma.

The body is not only the chariot of the soul, it is the temple of Truth. The Siddhas of India insist on transforming one's being by realising truth within oneself. Bharatiya Vidya disregards none of the elements of the world and asks us to see truth everywhere and in everyone.

The souls exalted by the supreme vision of unity are rare but live among us rather unnoticed by the maddening crowd lost in the busy commerce of life along its noisy thoroughfares.

In short, Bharatiya Vidya is a treasure-house containing priceless gems of wisdom.

Om Tat Sat

26. VIBHAGA YOGA

The two aspects of one Existence are matter and spirit. We can roughly say that *Purusha* or spirit is the soul and *Prakriti* or nature is matter. *Prakriti* has the three qualities of *Satwa*, *Raja* and *Tamas*, corresponding to unactivity, activity and inactivity as its essential characteristics. These qualities are really responsible for all the activities of evolution and involution which appear to go on in nature.

Every person is an embodied soul and in his or her composition we find both *Prakriti* and *Purusha* and that when he or she works, it is really the embodiment that does the work. If the power of doing work is due to *Prakriti*, it follows that the soul itself can never be the agent of the work which the *Prakriti* of the body and its qualities do. Generally, people do not understand the distinction between nature and soul and even when understood they are not always able to bear it in mind. Therefore, they mistake the body for the soul and hold the soul to be the agent of the work which the body does in reality. The practice of differentiation of matter from spirit and to be in fellowship with the spirit which is above the limitation of space and time is called *Vibhaga Yoga* or *Yoga* of differentiation.

The *Yoga* consists of four parts viz., *Viveka*, *Vairagya*, *Samadhi-Shatka*, *Mumukshata*. The identification of the soul with the body and mind, is really a misequation. We have to understand that the soul is immaterial, immutable and immortal whereas the body and mind are material, mutable and mortal. The soul and the body should be disequated to get rid of the misequation. The intellectual disequation is called *Viveka* (Discrimination) and the mental disequation is called *Vairagya* (Dispassion). *Samadhi-Shatka* consists of (1) *Sama* (2) *Dama* (3) *Uparati* (4) *Titiksha* (5) *Shraddha* and (6) *Samadhana*, and is a practical process of overcoming the pain.

The resting of the mind steadfastly on its goal (viz., *Brahman*) after having detached itself from the manifold sense objects by continually observing their defects is called *Sama*. Turning both organs of knowledge and those of action away from sense objects and placing them in their respective centres is called *Dama*. *Uparati* consists in the mind function ceasing to be affected by external objects. The bearing of all afflictions without caring to redress them, is called *Titiksha* or forbearance. *Shrad-dha* is the acceptance by firm judgement as true, of what the *Guru* instructs. The constant concentration of the intellect of the ever pure *Brahman* is called *Samadhana* or self-settledness.

Mumukshata is the ardent desire to escape from the bondage created by the misequation. The aspirant is then qualified for a higher course which involves efforts to overcome the ignorance of non-equation of the soul with the *Brahman*. Even when the aspirant has succeeded in overcoming the misequation of the soul with the body and mind, it does not mean that he can immediately learn to equate the soul with *Brahman*. It is not possible to give up all of a sudden that attitude and take up the reverse attitude of equating the soul with *Brahman*. The very idea of equating the soul with *Brahman* has to be put inside the mind of the aspirant and dinned into his ears till the aspirant becomes familiar with the subtle idea implied in the *Maha-Vakya*: "That, Thou Art".

The *Guru* who has abiding faith in the truth of equating soul with *Brahman* and who has realised it in himself is capable of imparting to his chosen disciples the subtle meaning of the *Mahavakya*, "Tat Twam Asi". The hearing of the meaning of *Mahavakya* by the disciple is called *Sravana*. The reconciliation of the Truth in the mind of the disciple is called *Manana* or cogitation. Further practices of the Truth by mental repetition without strain is called *Dhyana* or meditation. The sustained realisation of the equation concept is known as *Samadhi* in which the disciple identifies himself with *Brahman*. Indeed, the knower of *Brahman*, becomes *Brahman*.

27. VINAYAKA: THE SUPREME LORD

Vinayaka is the Supreme Spirit invoked at the beginning of every event for removal of impediments. *Vinayati Sikshayati Dushtaan Vighnaamscheti Vinayakha*: He is called Vinayaka because he punishes the evil men and annihilates all obstacles. Again: *Neengh praapane; Vigatho Naayakaha Prabhuryasya Svatantratvaat*: He is independent and under no control. He holds total sway over all without opposition. He has no leader over him and he is all in all. Every one has to bow to him and worship him before launching upon any work if there were to be no obstacles bogging its success.

*Sa jayati Sindhuravadano devo
yatpaadapankaja Smaranam
Vaasaramaniriva tamasaam
raaseennasayati Vighnaanaam.*

All praise and victory to the elephant-faced Lord Gajaanana meditation of whose lotus feet has the power of destroying all obstacles like the sun destroying darkness.

He is Vighna Vinayaka and Vighneswara. He is at once the creator of *vighnaas* and their destroyer too.

*Sarva Vighnakaramdevam Sarva Vighnavivarjitam
Sarvasiddhi pradaataaram Vande ham Gananaayakam*

He causes *vighnaas* and is bereft of them. He gratifies and fulfils all desires and fruits of works undertaken as well as the *Ashtasiddhis*. That is why he is first worshipped and his blessings are sought. That was a boon bestowed on him by the Lord Parameswara and the goddess Parvathi, his parents, and also by all the gods and goddesses at the time of his birth. His origin denotes how he had combined in himself all the qualities rendering him one with the Supreme Brahman.

Mother Parvathi was pining for a son of her own. Lord Parameswara wanted to grant her desire. He looked at her meaningfully and from out of earth created a child's shape. He gave it to her. She thought her Lord was joking with her and set down the child on the ground when it became animated and began to cry. She then held the child to her breasts when they became filled with milk so that she gave milk to the child. Then she gave the child fondly to her husband. The Lord said on taking the child that he would become shortlived. As he pressed the child to him, it fell down dead with head and trunk falling asunder. The mother was inconsolable. The Lord tried every method to attach the head to the trunk and bring the boy to life.

All his efforts were in vain when he heard the Divine Voice from the sky saying: "O Lord! There is no use of trying to revive the child with that head. The parts will again fall on account of Sani seeing the child. If another head is attached to the body, the child will live. As the child had fallen with its head to the North, get the head of any person or animal lying with the head to the North and attach it to the body when the child will come to life."

Hearing these words the Lord ordered Nandi, his loyal attendant, to go all over the world and get a head as desired. Then Nandi went on his errand. Finally after hard search he found that only the elephant Airaavata was lying with head to the North at that time. So after a tight battle with Indra he beheaded it and took it to the Lord Parameswara.

The head was duly attached when lo! the boy came to life. Just then Brahma, Vishnu, Indra, the other deities, the sages, *rishis*, *siddhaas* and *saadyaas* came there.

The beauty of the child was unique and charming with the head of the elephant. All praised his glory.

Brahma, the creator, said that the child should be called Vinayaka and should be worshipped first before anyone or at the beginning of any event or work. He gave Vinayaka a rosary and blessed him with immortality. Brihaspati, the preceptor of the Devaas, bestowed him with the sacred thread. The goddess Saraswathi made him knowledge incarnate by giving all branches of learning and the vidyas. She gifted him with a bell. Lord Vishnu gave him the vessel of Ambrosia. Mother Earth gave him a mouse for his mount. Lord Siva gave him the tiger skin while Goddess Parvati gave him longevity. Goddess Mahalakshmi bestowed the eightfold riches while Varuna gave him the Paasa or noose. Vayu, the windgod, gave a garland of *Mandaara* flowers while Indra, the Lord of gods, gave the goad or *Amkusa*.

As he was born adversely affected at first with a *vighna* or obstacle, he was called Vighneswara. He was made the leader of the *Pramathaganaas* forming the retinue of Iswara and so, called Ganaadhipati. As he was born on Chaturthi, the fourth day of the bright part of the month Bhaadrapada, Lord Parameswara and Mother Parvati ordained that all should worship him specially on that day invariably. All the deities present accordingly declared that every one who worshipped Vinayaka that day should be successful in their work, should have all their desires satisfied and should be protected by Vinayaka against all evil.

*Mooshaka vaahana Modakahasta, chaamarakarna vilambita
sootra,*

*Vaamanaroopa Maheswara putra, Vighna Vinayaka paada
namaste!*

The prayer is therefore for the Lord of Vighnaas, the son of Maheswara, of short stature with ears like fans and long sacred thread, seated on the vehicle of the mouse and having a pudding of flour (*modaka*) in his hand. He shall ward off all

evil and protect all against the hurdles of life when they invoke his aid at the beginning of all endeavour. He is *Chaturthi poojana preeto chaturthi tithi sambhavaha*. That is, he is pleased when worshipped on Chaturthi day being born on a Chaturthi day.

*Mahaaganapatirbuddhipriyo kshipraprasaadanaha
Rudrapriyo Ganaadhyaksho Umaaputro ghanaasanaha*

He is called Mahaaganaadhipati. God Rudra is fond of him so that he made him the presiding force over the Ganaas. He is the destroyer of sins. The vedic hymn says: *Ganaanaam tvaa Ganapatigumhavaamahe Kavimkaveenamupamasravastamam, Jyeshtaraajam Brahmanaam Brahmanaspata aanassrunvan-nootibhisseedaa saadanam*. He is the Lord of the Ganaas, the poet of poets, the Jyeshtaraaja or the pre-eminent Lord among the gods, the Brahma and the Brihaspati.

Vinayaka is the *Gakaaraakshara Devata*. The letter "Ga" stands for wisdom. He is knowledge itself. The letter "Na" stands for *Moksha* or salvation. The term *Gana* therefore signifies the combination of wisdom and salvation which are given by Vinayaka who is the Lord of Ganga.

*Ganeseti tryarnaatmakamapi varam naama sukhadam
Sakrutproacchairucchaaritamiti Nrubhihi paavanakaram
Ganesayaikasya pratijapakarasyaasya sukrutam
Savignaatoa naamnaha Sakala Mahimaakeedrusa vidhaha*

The utterance of the word "Ganesa", the most illustrious holy name of Vinayaka, is fruitful of the greatest prosperity to mortals sanctifying them and providing them with all marvellous powers.

*Ganesetyahvam yahpravadati muhustasya purataha
Prapasyamstadvaktram Swayamapiganastishtati tadaa
Swaroopasyagnaanam tyamuka iti naamnaasyabhavati
Prabodhahsuptasya tvakhilamiha saamathyamamunaa.*

One who utters this holy name will find that *Ganas*, that is the words forming the basis of the *Sabdabrahman*, settle themselves in his mouth and make him realise the Lord who is *Sabdabrahman* himself. He will realise *Aatma-jnaana*, know the Reality, become free from illusion, get awakening and attain godhead. So powerful is the utterance with intense devotion of the holy name of *Mahaaganadhipati*. For Vinayaka is knowledge himself. He is the giver of all *vidyaas* par excellence and the redoubtable giver of salvation to those who worship him with singleminded devotion.

Lord Ganesa is called *Ekadanta*—of single tusk. By that he shows that “Eka” that is Maaya or illusion should be rooted out by “danta” or actual knowledge of reality. *Kaartikeyoat-paatitaika dantatwaa dekoadantaa yasya sa Ekadanthaha*. He became *Ekadanta* as one of his tusks was pulled out by Kaartikeya or Murugan. It was on account of a tussle between them when Vinayaka obstructed Kumara in his task of prescribing *Streepurusha Lakshanaas* or the attributes of the male and the female without propitiating him at first as ordained by the gods. The tiff was patched up by Parameswara and Lord Narayana. Narayana told Kumara that he should give back that *danta* to Vinayaka who should be worshipped at first at all events when something is desired. Kaartikeya agreed to it but said that the *Vishaana* or horn given by him must be kept by Vinayaka as an attribute failing which he would burn. Thus it happened that Ganesa became one-tusked and is holding one *danta* in his hand. It was acknowledged that he is the Lord of obstacles and their wiper out and Kumara agreed to it. In this course of tussle, Maheswara who went as a mediator became *Kapaali* or holder of the skull in hand.

Lord Vinayaka is called *Sumukha*, of the auspicious and charming face. He is hailed by 16 names viz: *Sumukha, Kapila, Gajakarnika, Lambodara, Vikata, Vighnaraaja, Ganaadhipa,*

Dhoomaketu, Ganaadhyaksha, Phalachandra, Gajaanana, Vakratunda, Soorpakarna, Heramba and *Skandapoorvaja*, as well as *Ekadanta*, the second name.

If these 16 names are read or uttered at the beginning of the learning process, marriage, entrance to a place or departure from it, war and all sorts of work, no impediments will occur and Lord Ganesa blesses the person doing so with complete success protecting him from all dangers and evil.

The Lord's shape is indicative of the fact that for one to become one with Brahman there is no bar. However deformed or in any way defaced or uncouth or with any form of disability, one can attain the Highest. No one should look down upon another of any unshapeliness. He punished the Moongod for his ridiculing him on that account.

He is called *Heramba*. He *Rudra sameeperambate tishtateeti Herambaha*. He is always alongside of Rudra, the Lord Parameswara and hence *Heramba*. Again *Rugathau, Herate Vardhayat—Bhaktaanitivaa*. He is *Heramba* because he makes his devotee prosper and makes him advance to the Highest state of eternal bliss. Further "He" indicates the absolute state of despair and helplessness on account of lack of succour and *Ramba* signifies protection or safety from all dangers and obstacles. So *Heramba* or *Vinayaka* is the refuge of the despaired and weak.

He is *Soorpakarna* for he lets in all noble thoughts winnowing the gross ones and filling the devotee with the real ideas devoid of delusion and mundaneness. The *paasa* or the noose in his hand suggests the worldly ties, complexities and dangers that smother the mortal and as its wielder he clears his devotee from all that mire.

The goad or *Amkusa* given to him by Indra symbolises his control over the universe whose affairs he directs with it.

He is *Vakratunda* or one having the winding trunk. The winding trunk denotes the hurdlesome and illusive *Samsara* by overcoming which alone one can attain salvation. He is *Pranavaswaroopo vakratundam*. The trunk is of the form of *Aumkara* which is the sovereign means for ending the cycle of births and deaths.

Vighneswara is worshipped in 32 forms according to the type of *siddhi* or attainment desired. The *Vighneswara* who is meditated upon by the *Yogins* has the trunk drawn inwards towards the chest.

*Ekadantam chaturhastam paasamamkusadhaarinam
Radamcha varadam Hastairbibhraanam Mooshakadwajam
Aavirbhootamcha Srushtyaadou Prakrutheh Purushaatparam
Evam dhyayati yoa nityam sa yogee yoginaam varaha.*

The *Vighneswara* who is contemplated upon by those who want to become the high-ranking *yogins* is of one tusk with four arms, holding the noose and the goad in two, having a tusk and bestowing boons with the other two hands while sporting the flag with the emblems of the mouse. He has come out at the beginning of creation and is beyond *Prakriti* and *Purusha*. He is *yogiraja sevitam* and *yogasaali bhavitam*, that is, worshipped and served by the *yogins* of supreme position and meditated upon by them.

When the trunk is drawn sideward, that aspect of *Vinayaka* bestows material and spiritual riches while preserving the devotee of that form in the path of virtue while making him prosper in every way. Of these forms of Lord *Vinayaka*, the *Ganesa* who is represented as *Vallabhanayaka* is supreme in every respect. He is of red colour in this form. He is in the *Padmasana* pose in this shape holding the pitcher of Ambrosia bedecked with jewels and gems with the trunk drawn side-ward, with his *Maayaasakti* in feminine form seated on the

left. He is *Phalachandra*, that is, having the moon on his head indicative of immortality. In this aspect Ganeswara is the Supreme Lord. It behoves everyone who desires prosperity and plenty in this world and the other to meditate upon Vallabha Ganapati who is the Ultimate.

*Vaamaangake Sakti yutaa Ganesam Siddhistu Naanaa vidha
Siddhibhistam*

*Atyanta bhaavena Susevitetu Maayaa Swaroopaa Para-
maartha bhootaa.*

Hence it is that *Vallabheswara* is worshipped by all who want *siddhis* or fruits of various types.

Vinayaka is seated in the *Moolaadhara Chakra*. He can be invoked successfully by control of breath, *Praanaayaama*, accompanied by contemplation of the Ganapati mantra to which the Worshipful Sadguru should initiate the aspirant.

So for one to become free from this *Bhava Saagara* or the Ocean of births and deaths the only way is to pray to Lord Vinayaka for he is *Bhaktapriya* or lover of his devotees. Let us all offer our supplications to him.

*Ambikaa hrudayaanandam Maathrubhih pariveshtitam
Bhaktapriyam Madonmattam Vandeham Gananaayakam.*

Salutations to the giver of bliss to the mother Ambika by his pleasing activities in her company! Salutations to the lover of devotees! Salutations to the roused with the Mada! Salutations to the Lord of the *Ganaas*! Om Tat Sat!

28. SIGNIFICANCE OF SRI RAMAVATARA

*Vaamey Bhoomisutaa purascha Hanumaan paschaat
Sumitraasutaha
Satrughno Bharatascha paarsvadalayor Vaavyyaadi
koneshhucha/
Sugreevascha Vibheeshanascha Yuvaraat Taaraasuto
Jaambavaan
Madhney Neelasaroja komalaruchim Raamam Bhajey
Syaamalam.//*

“Salutations to the Lord Sri Rama, shining in the middle with the delicate lustre of the blue lotus and surrounded by Sita, the daughter of Mother Earth on the left; Hanuman in the front; Lakshmana, the son of Sumitra, at the back; Bharata and Satrughna on the sides and Sugreeva, Vibheeshana, Angada and Jaambavaan in the corner directions beginning with the Northwest.”

This glorious vision of the Lord Sri Rama sums up the significance of Sri Ramavatara.

The *avatar* of Sri Rama is Dharmavatara. The Supreme Brahman had come down to this mundane earth taking the shape of Sri Rama to establish Dharma on a solid and radiant pedestal. He had brought into being along with him the ideal and perfect characters of Sita the chaste wife; Hanumaan the truest devotee; Lakshmana the perfect brother; Bharat and Satrughna the very personifications of faithful self abnegation, and Sugreeva, Vibheeshana, Angada and Jaambavaan the manifestations of absolute surrender or *saranagati* to the Lord. They are the ideal personages whose footsteps we have to follow in order to uphold Dharma.

Sri Rama had a specific purpose before him. Parasurama, the earlier Amsavatar of the Supreme, had wiped out the arrogant and selfish tyrants of the Kshatriya race like Kaarthaveeryaarjuna and became a spent-up force having

renounced the use of weapons by oath before Indra, the Lord of Heaven. A new menace to the world had sprung up in the shape of Ravana, the giant king of Lanka. He had terrorised the gods and men and though well versed in the Vedas, became a slave to his senses and thereby vicious. So the Supreme had to come down in human shape to annihilate him and establish the rule of Dharma.

Ramavatara preaches that one has to live a full and perfect life in the world following the path of virtue with a spirit of renunciation.

While speaking to Kaikeyi, Sri Rama said:

"Naahamartha paro Devi! Lokamaavastumutsahey/ Vid-dhimaamrishibhistulyam kevalam Dharmamaasthitam."

"I am like the Rishis. I follow only Dharma. Note that I do not care for anything else."

He said to Lakshmana:

"Dharmohi paramo lokey Dharmey Satyam Pratishtitam Dharmasamsritamey taccha piturvachanamuttamam."

"Of the *purushaarthaas* or the ends of life enunciated for perfect life in the world, Dharma is the best. It is the offshoot of Truth. Implicit obedience to the father's word generates great Dharma. It must be followed."

He further amplified the theme in the following words:

"Dharmaartha Kaamaah khalu Taata! lokey/ Sameekshitaa Dharmaphalodayeshu// Teyatra sarveysyurarasamsayam mey/ Bhaaryeyva vasyaabhimataa tuputra/ Yasmimstu sarveysyurasannivishtaa// Dharmo yatassyaata dupakramey-ta/ Dveyshyo Bhavatyartha parohi Lokey/ Kaamaatmataa khalvapi naprasastaa.// Guruscha Raajaacha Pitaacha vruddhaha/ Krodhaatpraharshaadyadi vaapi Kaamaat// Yadvyaadiseytikaarya maveykshya Dharmam/ Kastanna-kuryaadanrusamsa Vrittihi."//

'It is told that for one who follows Dharma the other *purushaarthaas* come of their own accord. I have no doubt about it. By following Dharma alone everything can be achieved. In just the same way as a wife by being subservient to her husband follows Dharma, by being his beloved attains kaama and by begetting an offspring achieves Artha, so also one Dharma alone brings in its wake the attainment of all the other *purushaarthaas*. One should not do any act by which none of The *purushaarthaas* is achieved. He should, however, perform that act which is sure to bring in the fulfilment of three *purushaarthaas*. Again, one should only do that act which brings in Dharma even without satisfying the other two, Kaama and Artha. Also one should not do any act that satisfies Kaama alone or Artha alone. For, then the world would abhor him. When the Guru, the king, the father and the old command whether in anger, joy, or in Kaama, only a sinner would disobey. The follower of Dharma would not do so.'

Lord Rama laid great store by implicit obedience to the father's word as the basis of Dharma. He showed to the world the inexorable law of destiny. Man proposes, God disposes. He himself had to obey and bow to divine dispensation. Dharma ordained it for him. He had to carry out the words of Sanaka and Sanandana who had cursed Jaya and Vijaya his attendants for preventing them from having his *darsan* and also suffer for having killed the Bhrigupatni who had given shelter for the Asuraas. He fully explained to Lakshmana how Divine Will was invincible. No one could oppose it. No one could fathom it. It was sheer impossibility to be forearmed against divine dispensation. No one could know about it until it transpired. Nothing could stand before inexorable destiny. One could find that certain very carefully planned things fail while certain others succeed without any effort on his part. For all these Divine Will is the mainspring. We do not know the real causatives for happiness, sorrow, fear, anger, gain, loss, birth and death. All

these could not be comprehended by our mind. Rama said to Lakshmana that all the things that one could not know by his discrimination were the work of God. That was why he was not affected when his coronation was stopped.

So we find that Lord Sri Rama had shown to all that for salvation one should follow Dharma with a sense of detachment. He had by his personal example proved it and benefited all those around him.

Mother Sita followed him with all her heart and carried out her Dharma as a true woman and wife. She was in him, of him, by him and through him. Her very being was permeated by the Lord. In following his Dharma, Rama had cast her aside. But she was not affected by it. She bore everything calmly and lovingly. So did Lakshmana who had by his unstinted and wholehearted service to the Lord won his admiration so much so that the Lord declared that he would even sacrifice Mother Sita for his life. Bharata and Satrugna would not be outdone. They renounced all their pleasures and waited for Rama, the rightful heir, to come. The sandals of Rama were worshipped by them. Hanumaan, the peerless Bhakta, recognised the Supreme Brahman in Rama and became merged in him. The Lord resided in his heart always. Sugreeva, Vibheeshana, Angada and Jaambavaan by their *prapatti* and *saranagati* attained the lotus feet of the Lord. They had left their kith and kin to follow Dharma and dedicated themselves to the service of the Lord without any reservation. The Lord established a haven of peace, plenty and prosperity in the world and showed how an ideal king should rule. Dharma was his sheet-anchor and every other thing paled into insignificance before it.

Rama thus is the outstanding polestar guiding us as to how we should make a wise and healthy combination of the *pravritti maarga* with the *Nivritti* spirit. He is our saviour.

*"Yascha Raamam na pasyettu yamcha Raamo na pasyati/
Ninditassavaselloke svaatmaapyenam vigarhate."*

"That person who does not perceive Rama and on whom Rama's looks do not light would live blamed and condemned by all in the world and even his soul would be looking down upon him." Dasaratha told Lakshmana after Mother Sita went through the ordeal of fire:

*"Dharmam praapyasi Dharmajna yasascha vipulam bhuvi/
Raame prasanne Swargamcha Mahimaanam tathaivacha."*

He said: "You have attained Dharma and its fruits by following Rama. If Rama is pleased, Dharma, fame, heaven and all miraculous powers follow in their train."

Let us therefore surrender to Sri Rama and attain bliss even as Sita, Hanumaan, Lakshmana, Bharata, Satrughna, Sugreeva, Vibheeshana, Angada and Jaambavaan had done.

Well and good. But you have neglected me, *Mrityunjaya*, the conqueror of death. That was why you came very near annihilation. We had enjoined that *Ganapati* should be worshipped first before venturing on any mission. Without worshipping him and Goddess *Durga* at the beginning of any work one can meet only with insuperable obstacles. You have all been puffed up with Ego thinking of yourselves as the mainsprings of all action. Curb that *Ahankaar* and act humbly for the wellbeing of the universe." Thus admonished, the gods including *Brahma* and *Vishnu* prayed to him for the success of *Amrithamanthan*. They made *Chandra*, the moon god, the Goddess *Ganga* reside in the matted hairlocks of the Lord to keep him cool and unaffected by the effects of the poison *Haalaahala*. The Lord thus became *Somasundara*.

*"Yasyapranaamamaatreṇa santi sarvaascha sampadaha
Sarvasiddhipradam Sambhum tam vande Somasundaram!"*

Salutations are for the Lord beautified by Soma, the moon god, by worshipping whom only we can achieve all our desires and get all riches. He also became *Gangadhara*. He said that any one deigning to worship him on every *chaturdasi* or fourteenth day in the dark part of the month and on Monday would have all his or her desires fulfilled apart from worship to him on *Mahasivaratri* day.

Mahasivaratri thus was a day of deliverance to all from death physically and mentally and a day of deliverance of the gods from the tentacles of the Ego. It became the day of days when Lord *Siva* could be easily pleased. Any one who fasts on that day and keeps awake all night whether thinking of the Lord or not would surely attain the grace of the Lord and get salvation. A hunter called *Chanda* got upon a tree one day after the day's work was over to escape from a wild animal. He kept all night vigil. In the course of his sojourn in the tree he tore out some leaves from it and let them down. These leaves fell on a *Linga* which was under the tree without his noticing its

existence there. The day happened to be Mahaisvaratri day and the tree happened to be a bilva tree sacred to Lord Siva. In the morning he got down from the tree and went home where his wife kept awake all night waiting for his arrival. They had no food that night. She had meat ready for him. But by the time they came back it was swallowed by a dog. The wife wanted to kill the dog. But the man prevented her from doing so. He said: "I am satisfied as the dog is satisfied. This wretched body is only transient. Much care for its protection is mere foolishness. Forgive the dog." As both of them kept awake during the whole of the night and fasted without having the knowledge that it was *Mahasivaratri*, they attained salvation.

Mahasivaratri is so auspicious that Lord Siva sheds his grace on any one who even accidentally and unintentionally listens to his sankirtan on that day.

Once a brahmin widow led an evil life and had a son by a Chandala. That fellow became the worst sinner, a gambler and a thief to boot. One Mahasivaratri day he came near a Siva temple. There was a discourse at that time on the blessed acts and qualities of Lord Siva, the All Merciful and Omnipresent Yogeeswara. As he kept awake all through the night listening to the discourse he became blessed. In the next birth he was born to Chitrangada and ruled the country. He attained spiritual elevation and developed deep devotion to Lord Siva. It was he that was later born as Veerabhadra, the destroyer of Dakshayajna.

Contemplation of Lord Siva on *Mahasivaratri* day is very fruitful. The worshipper will have longevity of life, success and prosperity in all fields without let or hindrance. The *Linga* form was assumed to dispel the *avidya* of Brahma and Vishnu. They were made aware of the unity of the Trinity Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara. Worship of the *Linga* on Sivaratri day will lead us from untruth to truth, from darkness to light and

from death to immortality. One who is true, courageous and pure and has faith in the unconquerable majesty of Lord Siva will get Rudra's inspiration from his innerbeing and gets released from this bondage of samsara. It is only upto Lord Siva, the *Somasundara* who has the moon god that controls the mind in his locks of hair in good grip, to transform the minds of people, make them spiritually alert and attain oneness with him. Hence the importance of the night of Siva when the mind can undergo this magic alchemy and become one with the cosmic mind. So we shall pray:

*"Brahma Muraari Suraarchita Lingam
Nirmala Bhasita sobhita Lingam
Janmaja dhukka Vinaasakalingam
Tatpranamaami Sadaasiva Lingam!"*

Prayers are unto the *Linga* of Sadasiva worshipped by Brahma and Vishnu, the vanquisher of the giant Mura, to the *Linga* shining in full crystal splendour with pristine purity and unto the *Linga* that wipes out the sorrows of births. Siva is *Brahmaanandaswaroopa*, the eternal bliss and *Nirvikaara*, unaffected by change. He is found resting in the minds of men of purity. He does not make any discrimination between persons or things and does not have any prejudice. He bestows auspicious things in abundance on his devotees and makes them immortal. He is the redeemer and one who utters his name 'Hara' even without intention or volition is sure to attain him. He is *sulabhaprasanna*-easily propitiated. What other day can you have to think of him than the Mahasivaratri day, the day of deliverance of the universe from *Haalaahala* of Ahankaar?

